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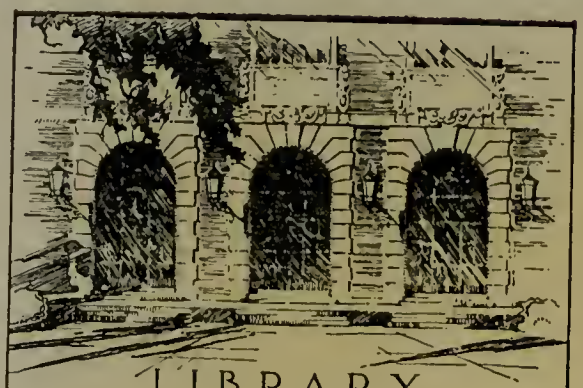

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FROM HIS OBLIGED FRIEND

AND FAITHFUL SERVANT,

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Authors of what is intended to be (like the present volumes) light reading, are sometimes tempted to make prefatory acknowledgments that illness and other depressing circumstances have attended the progress of their work. I doubt the policy of this plan either in propitiating the critic or in interesting the public. It is very questionable whether the state of mind or body influences the pen when it is able to move at all. Many a farce has been composed

in moods of hypochondria, and the deepest tragedies have often been the productions of the merriest fellows. But even admitting the contrary of my theorems, the captious reader is too fond of his privilege of *finding* faults, to receive a warning that he is to meet with them at every turn; while the most tolerant must be prejudiced against an effort to amuse, prefaced by a desponding face or a suit of mourning The better way is, surely, to let readers be cheerful and contented while they may. On this principle, I hope mine will believe that the following pages were written in high health, high fortune, and high spirits. With a friendly few, who may find reason to imagine the contrary, I have little fear of its doing any mischief.

A portion of the sketches, and one of the tales, contained in the first and second volumes of this *mélange*, have been reprinted from periodical works; and for another of the stories I am chiefly indebted to an original French manuscript. The anecdote entitled the Tea-pot Gentleman,

was communicated to a popular actor, and introduced by him into one of his entertainments in a garbled form, but has never before appeared in print. The remainder of the matter, forming about three-fourths of the whole, has been written many months, and the book was intended to appear early in the present season. This is stated merely to obviate the reproach of carelessly hurrying another novel, of more extended design, but by no means of more pretension, than those I have hitherto written, and which I hope to offer to the public before the end of the present year.

Though not matter of much interest, the public might be amused at the various debates to which the title of a new book gives rise, and surprised to learn that the first page is most commonly the last written. In the present case, I must frankly confess, that after sundry harassing efforts to hit upon a name which might tell unpresumingly (as all title pages should) the nature of the book it ushered into

the world, I have given up that part of my task, in something very like despair, leaving it entirely to my enterprising and experienced publisher, and giving him *carte blanche*, which I trust will be filled up to the public taste.

Brussels, 1829.

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A

TALE OF IRISH REVENGE.

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All who have studied the Irish character must have remarked, among its most obvious qualities, humour and revenge. A wild mixture of these two incongruous attributes is very common. We often see the deadly passion tempered by traits of that national jocularity, which has been pronounced to be "in conversation better than wit;" but which gives a more bitter flavour to the cup of misery, filled for the

object of vindictive pursuit. Numberless instances might be cited—but I shall be satisfied with recording one.

There is, in the diction of Ireland, as may be expected, and particularly in that of the remoter provinces, a coarse, but powerful, phraseology, not entirely confined to the lower orders, but garnishing the conversation of the gentry themselves, with a pungency too strong for the palate of refinement. Still it does not revolt us much in the sphere where we find it; for nothing is overpoweringly disagreeable but what is unnatural. The breadth of an Irish brogue cannot be, I should think, half so unpleasing to English ears, as the narrowness of Irish prejudice must be grating to English feeling. The man who, not ashamed of his country, honestly flounders on in all the errors of idiom and pronunciation, who declares, he "*will* be drowned, while nobody *shall* save him," is, I know, and I wish all my countrymen knew it, infinitely more honoured out of Ireland, than the king's English-

clipping renegade, whose loudest and basest boast is, that he despises the land of his birth.

In the colloquial familiarities of Irish intercourse, many proverbial and idiomatic phrases are used, unknown elsewhere. Some of this conversational coin is, however, in general circulation. Every one knows, that "having a crow to pluck with you," means, having a reproach to make to you; "picking a hole in one's coat," implies finding fault, *et cetera*. Now, "giving one a bone to pick," means, by moral analogy, throwing out some hint, or stating some fact of harsh and agitating tendency, which the mind may gnaw without being nourished—a file that corrodes the teeth which bite at it. The vengeance that strikes at the heart, and is smothered in its victim's blood, is not half so deadly or so desperate as this. But I have yet a good deal to say, before I come to the illustration of my subject.

It is now several years since, by circumstances of no importance here, I was invited to dine one

day with the Bar Club, in an Irish assize town, on one of the southern circuits. As barristers wish to be sometimes exclusive, they are glad to escape from the almost continual masquerade of their public life, and at their circuit dinners they admit no strangers, (except under peculiar circumstances); but, throwing off with the Toga the multitude of sins it covers, they shine forth the most sociable, most cordial, and the wittiest of all assemblies. I was very young at the time in question; and the brilliant conversation which I listened to, the flashes of merriment, the classical allusions, the anecdotes, the repartees, and the puns, altogether made an impression never to be effaced. I have seen a good deal, since that day, of celebrated scholars, writers, and wits; but, whether it is the effect of early impression, or the real fact, I think every after-display of intellectual variety, which I have witnessed since that one, has been *fade* and inferior in comparison with it.

Some time after the cloth was removed, and

while the bottle was going its cheerful rounds, every bumper smacking more freshly, from the fun with which it was flavoured, the door of the room slowly opened, and a man entered and stopped, cautiously holding the handle, neither advancing as if he had a right to come further, nor shewing any exact evidence of his confessing himself an intruder. His whole attitude spoke a mixture of confidence and doubt, the latter predominating; and he clearly paused for an invitation to advance. He gave me the impression of a guest who might have been expected without being bidden—one timidly acting under that most mortifying of privileges, *a general invitation.*

As I sat opposite the door, I could fully remark the figure and physiognomy of this new comer; and time enough was given me for observation, in consequence of the little attention he seemed to excite in those of the party, who, sitting at my side of the table, must have seen him as well as I did. The president, whose

talents have long since been promoted to a seat of more dignity, was in the act of spinning out a story of excellent texture, the web of which was so cunningly woven, and so dexterously coloured, as strongly to excite the audience, and make them the more indifferent to the stranger's interruption, or *intrusion*, as I must call it. But he bore in his whole aspect evidence of a still better reason for their indifference. He was poor!—a poverty, however, that was clearly that of a gentleman. His look shewed none of the hereditary meanness which walks hand in hand with the wretchedness of the lower classes of Irish. His black coat was quite threadbare, and its fashion of some years standing; but it fitted him, and did not hang loosely on the wearer, like an ill cut but not to be mistaken badge of beggary. His other garments, worn and faded as they were, did equal credit to his tailor, for they shewed to all possible advantage all that was good in the remnant of a once muscular and manly form. The visible verge of

the stranger's linen was clean, but bearing the tinge of Time's or Jealousy's jaundiced eye: the frill was puffed out into a display, which seemed less for ostentation than the convenience of covering the time-worn edges of the flowered vest; and the cravat, of the same citron hue, was tied in a profuse expenditure of "bows and ends," according to the plethoric taste of the last century, which may still be observed in the old dandies who carry their old fashions into this. The scanty remains of the stranger's hair were frizzed and dressed, and the scalp and forehead thickly larded with a paste of pomatum and powder, which covered the baldness, but could not *conceal* it, and placed the deformity of affectation upon the gracefulness of age. The hard and sun-burnt hat, held in one hand, was profusely powdered at the inside of crown and leaf, but no more able than the cranium it whilom covered to throw dust in the eyes of the observers, as to its actual "age and quality." A gold-headed cane dangled by a string from the wrist

of the other ungloved hand, which displayed more than one ring of ancient workmanship, that seemed to suit the long and well formed fingers. An eyeglass shewed itself full three quarters out from between the lower buttons of the vest, and a black ribbon fastened it round the neck.

The face of this reduced gentleman told a long story, I thought, of anxiety, and pride, and suffering. The features were of the common stamp of Irish provincial gentility—intelligent, marked, and somewhat coarse: but the whole expression was softened down into an air of weather-beaten composure; not as if a sudden blow of fate had marked the countenance with woe, but as if time and care had been long chiselling it together, in lines more numerous than deep. A multitude of wrinkles covered the forehead and cheeks; the mouth was drawn downward, and a deep frown more deeply shadowed the naturally sunken eyes. I well know that after-knowledge of events often deceives us into the belief that we have traced

character at first sight; but I cannot help thinking that I read in this face, on this first and last time of my beholding it, the tale of lingering and gradual disappointment, by which it had been furrowed.

As soon as the president had finished his story, and the hearty laugh which followed it had nearly subsided, he turned to the visitor, and exclaimed—

"Aha, Mr. M'Ronan, you are there!—come in, come in, welcome! We are glad to see you —come in, and sit down, and take a glass of wine."

On this invitation, unaccompanied as it was by any movement of consideration or ceremony on the part of the president or his friends, the *permitted* rather than the invited guest came in—to receive on sufferance the civility so proffered. He sat down at the end of the table on the left hand of the vice-president, who was *ex officio* the youngest member of the club; and, without laying down his hat, or being asked to put it

aside, he drank his bumper or two of claret, bowing cold and, I thought, proud acknowledgments to the nods and "your healths" that were flung at him. Nobody seemed to think it necessary to pay him any attention beyond that; and the conversation went on without any interruption, except one, at which I could not help being struck with some surprise. Following the example of the president, all the company (myself excepted) simultaneously put their hands into their pockets, and pulled forth their note-cases, or purses, or a single note or two, lying loosely for the occasion, as it were; and the vice-president, taking a bottle-waster in his hand, left his seat, and walked round the table, going successively to each person, beginning with the president, and receiving each individual donation, to which he added his own. As he came near me, I prepared to add mine to the rest; but one of the gentlemen next to me put his hand on my arm, and prevented my intention, saying—

"No, no, don't attempt that; you would desperately wound our poor pensioner's feelings. It is quite a professional affair: he is not exactly a mendicant, but is, rather, receiving, by small instalments, the return of large advances made to the brethren of the robe. Take no notice of this, and I will explain it all to you another time."

Taking the hint, I made no offer of contribution, and I avoided as much as I could any expression of wonderment or curiosity. The vice-president, when he had made his gathering, folded up the notes, which I could see were chiefly those of the lowest sums in circulation, single pounds or guineas; but one or two caught my eye of five times that amount. He then politely handed the packet to the visitor, who immediately rose, made a gentlemanly bow to the president, and several similar inclinations of the head to the rest of the company. "Good evening, Mr. M'Ronan!" sounded from every voice; but no one moved, until I,

somewhat indiscreetly, rose from my seat—but I was very young, and had not learned the *decorum* of smothering one's feelings, even at the certainty of wounding another's; and I could not help a blush of mingled shame and pity rising on my cheek, when I saw the indifference with which the party witnessed the look of humiliation and proud sorrow that came from that careworn face, as it withdrew from the room.

I took the earliest opportunity—indeed it was that very evening—to request the promised explanation from my neighbour; and he gave me the following sketch of the causes of the reduced gentleman's situation and circumstances.

Phelim M'Ronan, of Ronanstown, Esq., was, for aught he knew to the contrary, the father of the gentleman who had so much excited my attention. We must go back almost half way into the last century, to figure to our minds the bearing and character of an Irish squire, such as Mr. Phelim M'Ronan undoubtedly was;

and having let our minds fix themselves there, I will leave to the individual imaginations of my readers all the details of appearance and manners appertaining to this personage. In fact, I never saw as much as his picture; nor was my informant able to give me any particulars of his general conduct and habits. His information was confined to nearly one trait of character, one fact, one phrase almost; but, from that scanty hint, I think I have formed a very tolerable notion of Squire M'Ronan's person, disposition, and manners, with the sagacity expected from the Grecian of old, to whom a single brick was offered, as a specimen of the house he was about to purchase. I imagine him, then, tall, gaunt, phlegmatic, and unamiable — looking harsh things, even when he did not say them, and seldom saying them, only because he thought he could look them more harshly; but when he *did* say them, giving a bitter and biting emphasis to every syllable, that left the listener no chance of escape from his severity.

Of his wife I have still fewer materials for a sketch. But I figure her to myself a passionate, yet strong-minded woman, liable to be agitated to the very depths of feeling by a sarcasm; and having wherewith in her heart to return it more bitterly—tipped with gall, as it were, like an arrow shot back to one's enemy with new poison on its barb.

These form a brace of unprepossessing characters, and are not very flattering specimens of Irish life. But there is a great deal of what is Irish in them, notwithstanding; and had I been able to have filled up each meagre sketch, with the many redeeming merits so profusely springing in the same soil—the generosity, the courage, the warm-heartedness, and the indigenous humour, that runs over the whole surface of the national character—the squire and his lady would, no doubt, appear much less repulsive than, I fear, they now must to my readers, as well as myself. I have borne hard upon them, I confess: and, after all, I form my judgment

but on *one phrase* recorded of the man; and I paint the woman only from her one solitary repetition of it, as if I had judged of the extent and formation of a cavern from the echo it sent back to a single sound. That important phrase was, "And there, my darling, is a bone to pick!"

Such was invariably Phelim M'Ronan's short and pithy winding-up to the matrimonial squabbles which arose at times between him and "the misthress;" such the simple retort with which he replied to many a volley of hot-headed and warm-hearted intemperance in word and gesture. Whenever his "darling Nelly" assailed him with a torrent of abuse, in the violent paroxysms to which he loved to work her up, he used quietly to listen, with a smile of true sardonic twist upon his lips; and then, leisurely taking out his snuff-box, and tapping it, and opening it, and taking an ample pinch, and returning the box to his waistcoat pocket, he would utter some half-expressed sneer, some irritating equivocation, or

sarcastic hint, and adding to it the never-failing *refrain*, "and there, now, my darling Nelly, is a bone to pick,"—he would stalk out of the room, gently closing the door.

"Oh that he had but banged it after him! that he had but sworn an oath or two! that he had but stormed, or fumed, or grown red, or pale!—any thing, in short, but have shewn that cold-blooded command of himself!" would the poor "misthress," no doubt, exclaim to herself, when left alone to gnaw *the bone* thus flung to her. And then, as she got cool and calm herself, and the servants and neighbours remarked how soon she recovered from her bursts of passion, and she smiled on and fondled "Phelim Aroon," or "Phelim Avich," or "Phelim Alanna," or Phelim with any other epithet of endearment, every one wondered how she could so quickly shake off the fit; and she was universally pronounced to be a most forgiving wife, and "the very sowl of a kind-hearted crathur."

But these shallow observers were all wrong, and the character of Mrs. M'Ronan was much too deep for their fathoming. For never did a more desperate or deadly spirit of revenge lurk under the semblance of good-nature and forgiveness. At what period this dark passion arose, how it was fostered, or when it was fully developed in her mind, it is not possible even to guess. Nor can conjecture penetrate the mystery of thoughts and feelings which it put into fermentation, and at last settled into decision. We may not trace the workings of every diabolical suggestion which rose, self-engendered, in the mind of this woman. How often did she plan her scheme of revenge? What were the means first thought of, how canvassed, how long considered, why rejected? Was the poison ever bought or mixed, the knife whetted and concealed—the bravo tampered with or hired? Has conscience, or cowardice, or woman's softness caused the dose to be destroyed, or the weapon cast aside? Heaven alone can tell — for the cri-

minal carried her secrets with her to the grave; and it was only on its very verge that she compassed the execution of her fiend-like purpose—different, indeed, from the vulgar modes of vengeance glanced at above, and, oh! how much more effective to agonize the heart to which a dagger's thrust had been mercy!

Every human being has his ruling passion and particular prejudice, independent of the individual traits of disposition which distinguish him from his fellows. Phelim M'Ronan's *passion* was love for his children; his *prejudice*, family pride. He had two sons, born in the two first years of his marriage with Miss Ellinor O'Sullivan, the "darling Nelly" of my story; and these boys were worthy scions of the family trees from the graft of which they sprung. M'Ronan of Ronanstown was a name and title as old as any in the province; and "O'Sullivan of the Brakes" spoke, in its very sound, an antiquity and nobleness which wanted no confirmation from the herald's office. It was hard to say

which family was the more ancient, or the more distinguished in all the characteristics that give honour to a race. M'Ronan felt his blood to be at once thick and pure, and it seemed to tingle in his veins like liquid amber. He was convinced, at any rate, that it was not like the blood of almost any one else, and he paused long before he would consent to let it join in the current of even that of O'Sullivan. But, after mature consideration, he made the match which head and heart, interest and inclination, seemed so fully to justify ; and as his children were successively presented to him, he glowed with proud conviction of continuing unsullied and perfect, what ought to have been, if it was not, " a race of kings."

But the M'Ronans and O'Sullivans, though no longer monarchs, had a large portion of honorary sovereignty attached to them. The first of these families, which is more particularly our concern, had rights of prescription almost equal to those of law. Their thousands of acres of

mountain and bog were peopled by a fine hardy, devoted tenantry, who voluntarily yielded privileges of feudality which the statute book no longer recognized, and Phelim M'Ronan wanted little to persuade him that he was himself as much a prince as were his numerous recorded ancestors, who ruled for many a century of bygone glory, over the district of which he still retained a portion. Nothing, in short, could exceed his arrogance of spirit, and it was rather heightened than softened by the unbounded affection for his offspring, which, in a mind so harsh and haughty, was more likely to be mere instinct than constitutional tenderness. He looked on his two boys, Remmy and Patrick, with a fierce delight, that was compounded as much of pride as of love; but, be the elements of his attachment to them what they might, it *was* an attachment of almost unparalleled force. I am not able to say in what proportion Mrs M'Ronan sympathized with her husband's feelings on this point. She might have loved her

children in their infancy—she might have been proud of them in their boyhood—she might have indulged in visions of their full grown prosperity —let us hope she did! for a mother without such feelings is little less than a monster, and I would fain believe such out of nature. But whatever her share in those sentiments might once have been, the time came when they all withered before the blight which swept across her heart; and they perished in the shade of the Upas of Revenge which her husband's persecuting insolence had engendered. In the very hour of death, she sacrificed at the shrine of this demoniac passion not only the whole earthly happiness of the father, but all the worldly prospects of the sons.

An illness of long standing, which gave her time for ample preparation, brought Mrs. M'Ronan to death's door; and on the very last day of her existence, at the very latest hour, indeed, having ascertained from her physician that recovery was impossible, and her

final moment at hand, she called her husband from an inner room, where he waited in anxiety and agitation, and she summoned him to her bed-side. Mr. M'Ronan was attached to his wife. He had married her from liking as well as from interest. He had gone through life with her, as cordially and contentedly as he had looked to do when he chose her "for better for worse;" and he saw the parting moment now at hand, with full as much grief, and much more emotion, than he thought such an event could excite in him. He approached the death-bed cautiously, and with a kind expression on his sorrowing face. The doctor, who stood at the open door of the inner room, was witness to the scene; and, not intending any violation of confidence in hearing what passed, he did not scruple to mention it afterwards when Mr. M'Ronan called on him to do so.

"My darling Nelly," said M'Ronan, "can I give you any comfort? Is there any thing

you want?" and the words were accompanied by a look of great kindness.

"Hold your tongue, Phelim Aroon," replied his wife, in a tone uniting physical weakness with moral courage; "hold your tongue—I want to speak—only to speak; so offer me nothing, and say nothing. My time is short, and I have something to say to you, worth listening to, Avich!"

"Whatever you please, my dear," said M'Ronan, "only don't fatigue or distress yourself. You are weak, and had better not say much, may be, or wait a bit."

"Phelim Alanna, death won't wait! and I have something on my conscience—something that's choking me till I tell it to you." And here an expression of fierce impatience worked in the muscles of her distorted countenance.

"Then, my darling Nelly," exclaimed the husband, quickly, and alarmed, "will I call in his reverence? Father Michael is in the next room."

"No, no—I have nothing to say to *him*, Phelim. You know, Aroon, it's little I value confession, or ever did—but I must confess one thing to *you*—and you'll forgive me or not as you like, Phelim; but don't be hard with your own Nelly in her last gasp."

"Oh! my darling," sobbed M'Ronan, "don't speak that way to me; you break my heart. I never loved you rightly till now, Nelly. I hope you forgive me all my ill-nature, and that you love your poor Phelim, Nelly, in this sorrowful hour?"

"You never gave me any ill-nature, Phelim Mavourneen, if it wasn't that nasty word that you sometimes threw at me—and many's the heart-scald it gave me, Phelim Avich! But, the boys, you know, Phelim—it's of them I wanted to speak to you, or *one* of them, any how."

"Oh! whatever you like, my darling. Say whatever you like. It shall be done. All your wishes about the dear boys shall be most faith-

fully performed. What is it, Nelly? Speak out, if it doesn't tire you, my love."

To this impatient, yet suppressed, burst of paternal affection, the mother replied, by a look of bitterness at once deathlike and deadly, which made the doctor shudder, and seemed to curdle poor M'Ronan's blood.

"I'm going fast, Phelim," faintly murmured the expiring woman. "I have but a minute more to speak to you, Alanna. Listen to me, then! You never knew me to tell a lie, Phelim?"

"Never."

"And you're sure, aren't you, that I wouldn't tell one *now?*"

"Indeed, indeed I *am* sure of it, Nelly."

"Why, then, Phelim, you know the two boys, don't you?"

"To be sure I do, my darling. Oh, then, what is it you have to say about them, Nelly? Tell it to me at once, for you're killing me as well as yourself, honey. The look out of your

eyes is terrible—oh, my God! is it laughing you are? Oh, that's quite shocking, Nelly, darling—will I call the doctor, or the priest, my love? What's the matter with you, Nelly—what's the matter?"

She had raised herself up in the bed, and grasped his arm, and fixed her glazed eyes upon him; and her convulsed features seemed indeed to wear a ghastly smile; and, with broken yet distinct utterance, she exclaimed in hollow tones—

"Well, then, Phelim, mind what I say to you; and remember it's the death-gasp that says it; but it's true, quite true, as sure as death itself—one of those boys *is not your child!*—'and there,' Phelim Aroon, 'is a bone to pick for you!'"

She sunk exhausted on the bed; her features struggled with death; a convulsion passed across them, and fixed the hideous expression of laughter which distorted her open mouth. Her strained eyeballs rolled frightfully, and

their gaze seemed to follow the movements of her victim! The doctor, the priest, and the nurse rushed into the room, not less attracted by the sight and sound of the woman's fast-coming death, than by the appalling effect which her last words produced on her husband.

When the horrid sounds of her last articulate sentence reached his ears, he sprang up from his kneeling posture by the bed side, and rushed back some paces, as if electrically repelled from what he heard and saw. He raised his hands above his head with almost maniac gesture, clasped them together, staggered forward again, and, with bent body and strained eyes, exclaimed, in tones that seemed suffocating him as they were uttered—

"Oh, God, Nelly! what did you say? Oh, don't say *that*, darling—any thing, any thing in the world but that! Oh, you're raving, you're raving, aren't you, my own Nelly? Won't you speak another word? One word more

Nelly, only one! Oh, which of them, *which* of them, Nelly? For the mercy of Heaven, and the sake of your soul, Nelly, which of them is *mine?* Is it Patrick or Remmy? Oh, tell me, tell me *which*, and I forgive you all, and God forgive you too! Oh, you won't speak—you can't, may be! But make a sign, do, Nelly, dear! If it's Patrick that's *mine*, *my own* child, put up your finger, or nod your head, or any thing, any thing. Or is it Remmy? *Which*, *which*, Nelly, darling? Oh, Jasus! how frightful you're looking at me—laughing! I can't bear it, I can't bear it! Oh, shocking, shocking!" and then, exhausted with horror and suffering, he sank down, and hid his head in the bed-covering.

The priest, the doctor, and the nurse, shocked as they themselves were, did all they could to remove the unfortunate man, and attempted to assuage his suffering. They implored him to pay no attention to the incoherent expressions of a dying woman; they cautioned him not to

embitter her parting moments by his violence; they urged the imprudence of his alarming the attendants, who crowded the outer room and lobby, and to whom he was betraying this death-bed rhapsody: but nothing was of any avail. He regained his standing posture, and continued to pour his vehement entreaties for explanation into the death-deafened ears of the lifeless body: for, while the priest and the physician prepared their last rites and remedies, the subject of their solicitude was far and for ever beyond its reach!

"Oh, Nelly, Nelly, won't you speak one word more, nor make a sign even?" exclaimed the unhappy M'Ronan, recovering fortitude enough to look again upon the features from the frightful contortions of which he had just shrunk. As he raised his eyes towards the bed, he was addressed at once by the three witnesses to the scene.

"Its all over, Mr. M'Ronan—the pulse is extinct!" said the doctor.

"Let her sowl depart in peace!" piously murmured the priest.

"Arrah, master, agrah, let the corpse be quiet! Oh, wisasthrew, wisasthrew! and is it dead you are, ahagar?" loudly exclaimed the nurse, flinging herself between M'Ronan and the senseless remains of his wife, and beginning the wailings of the Coronach before the regular time.

"Dead!" fiercely uttered M'Ronan, throwing incredulous and reproachful glances at those around him—"dead! Impossible! She wouldn't, she couldn't depart, with that terrible word in her mouth, without easing my mind as well as her own conscience. No, no, she can't be dead—she's only fainting. Hush, hush—give her air to recover a bit. Oh, Christ! not mine—not *my* child; and which of them is it? For the love of Heaven, father Michael, say something or other to me! Doctor, dear, can't you save her—if it was only to let her speak the one word, Patrick or Remmy? Oh, save her,

save her, if it's in your art to do it! There's nothing I wouldn't give—Ballymagrath and Glenshoughlin—the two town-lands shall be all yours—ay, the half of Ronan's-town itself! Oh God! my head is splitting open!—save her, save her!"—and, after this incoherent and heart-rending utterance of his distracted feelings, he sunk into the arms of the people around him, his two sons included; all the family and the "followers" being attracted to the room by the combination of woeful sounds which rung through the ancient mansion.

In due course of time Mrs. M'Ronan was waked and buried, with all the ceremonies usual on those occasions. Nothing could exceed the anguish of mind which the unfortunate widower endured. From the hour of his wife's death till that in which the grave closed over her mortal remains, he never slept. The notion that she could not be dead—that she *would* not die and leave him in such despairing uncertainty, haunted him night and day. He could

not shake off that weakness, though he saw the cold and colourless corpse before him—and even when the coffin was nailed down, or, still later, when the earth closed over it, M'Ronan seemed to strain forward, with eager eyes and listening ears, as if to catch some movement, or some sound of returning life, from her who was gone for ever.

And never was the sound of recovered happiness to breathe its gentle influence on M'Ronan's mind. From the moment in which the self-accusing revelation, or self-damning falsehood, left the lips of his either-way guilty wife, he felt as if a coal of fire had fallen upon his heart, and consumed it with slow agony. But he did not, all at once, sink under this affliction. His iron nerve and harsh nature resisted for a while the wasting torture, and neither physical nor moral suffering seemed to bear him down. He summoned every energy of body and mind to oppose the malady that gnawed upon him. He roused up every power of reason and resistance. He strove to believe the

kind assurances of his friends, that the dying woman only raved, and that her horrid communication had no truth in it. But then he recalled her solemn tones—her collected manner—her eager asseverations; and he could not doubt what, in such a way, and at such a time, she had revealed.

"Could it be," he would ask himself and others, "that a woman like her, of integrity and unsullied fame, of a race as pure, or almost as pure, as my own, would, at the hour of death, have *invented* such a horrid means of agonizing me for ever, and ruining her children, for at least they are both *hers!* or could the arch fiend have been permitted by Heaven to steal into her dying frame, and prompt the utterance of such a lie? Oh, no—oh, no! 'tis too true. It was conscience, working in her powerful mind, and swelling her proud heart. But the truth would out, and she scorned to die, deceiving me."

Thus satisfied of the fact—for *he* never

dreamt of Revenge having suggested the terrible retaliation, nor would he listen for a moment to the suggestion that gave, what he considered, such a monstrous solution to the mystery—his next source of anguish was in the utter impossibility of ascertaining *which* of the sons was "not his child." In every way to which calculation or conjecture could torture probabilities or chances, did M'Ronan try the different bearings of this perplexing case. He retraced with painful accuracy all the circumstances of domestic conduct, from the day of his marriage till the birth of both the boys, for he was resolved to leave nothing unreverted to, which might throw a chance beam of light upon the gloom of his almost hopeless examination. He recalled the early months of his union, when his darling Nelly was in seeming his, and his alone; before those *bones* of contention were flung by his vile temper to mar their wedded happiness. He then dwelt on their first differences, their disputes, their quarrels. He

summoned up the memory of his wife's recreations, her acquaintances and connexions. He went over again the visitors at Ronanstown Castle, his wife's young cousin, Rory O'Sullivan, a rattling, fox-hunting, off-handed fellow; then a certain captain in the black horse, a clever, handsome man, with a laced cocked hat and big whiskers, who had been quartered in a town hard by, and used to come out often to dine and sleep at the castle. Others, too, rose in magic succession on the self-tortured mind of M'Ronan, like the apparitions flitting before Macbeth's deluded vision, each one seeming to smile on the questionable children,

"And point at them for his."

In the agitation of his conflicting doubts, and fears, and hopes, M'Ronan would sometimes fix, with a sort of desperate reliance, on one of the boys as *his;* and then the whole force of his fierce nature would turn into bitter hatred against the other. Violence of every kind was

sure to be lavished on the youth who, for the time, was illegitimate. But the shifting of some thought, the turn of some surmise, the shadow of some old suspicion flitting across his brain, would at once reverse his opinion, and then, in a paroxysm of detestation, he would commit acts of the worst tyranny against his late favourite. These grievous alternations of judgment and feeling might, however, have been borne, and, in the end, perhaps, forgiven by the unfortunate young men. But a more serious consequence resulted from the distracted father's incertitude. Almost the whole of his property, and it was a large one, was in his own power, he having joined his father in one of those tricks of legal legerdemain, by which the offspring of a respectable race may be, in a truly Irish way, ruined in perspective, and robbed of their inheritance before they possess it. With the power of disposing of his estate as he chose, he had always had the intention of dividing it share and share alike between his two sons, until the death-

bed legacy of misery, left to the unhappy trio by the wife and mother, produced the effects which I have detailed. But now, his disposition of his property was made, reversed, confirmed, and retracted oftentimes in the course of a month, a week, or a day. Wills and codicils innumerable were drawn out, executed, and destroyed—but not *all*, unfortunately for the unhappy successors to this wretched man.

I pass over many minor afflictions falling on the family. M'Ronan's total estrangement from his wife's connexions, who were furiously indignant at his receiving as fact what they persisted in believing the ravings of a death-bed, and who, one and all, repelled such a dishonouring stain, cast, even by herself, on any daughter of the chaste house of O'Sullivan. Then there was the still more deplorable breaking up of the mutual affection which had from infancy subsisted between the brothers. They long resisted the efforts of their father to fill them, each by turns, with his own dark doubts, and the hatred of

which they were successively the object. But as years grew on them, and the interested feelings of manhood took place of youth's generous impulses, they, little by little, imbibed the poison which had embittered the sources of their father's peace of mind. They, in their several hours of favouritism, became by degrees corrupted by the sunshine of unnatural indulgence in which they basked—and when in their respective turns they suffered the indignities and ill-treatment they had awhile been free from, the change brought an irresistible feeling of dislike and jealousy, and finally of detestation against each other.

In short, when Phelim M'Ronan, utterly worn out by his misery, followed his wife to what was, I fear, her unquiet grave, ten or a dozen years after her death, his two sons, then about thirty years of age, were as desperate enemies to each other, as if no tie of blood, or former feeling of affection, had ever united them together. I forget which was in possession of Phelim M'Ronan's favour, and consequently the named suc-

cessor to his fortune, at the moment of this crisis. But it was of little matter—for two wills were discovered, bearing the very same date—and it was even said, that on the day they were executed, the one preceding his death, M'Ronan, in his tortured anxiety, had actually made and reversed full half a dozen of those conflicting documents. The greater portion, however, were destroyed, but the partizans of either son took especial care, in the confusion of such a time, to preserve one each; enough, as it turned out, to utterly ruin the last remnant of the ancient family, and scatter their possessions to the winds.

Need I say that one law-suit immediately followed? Perhaps a *hundred*, in various shapes and ramifications, would be nearer the mark. For five-and-twenty years, every court in the kingdom, of law or equity, was familiar with the sounds of M'Ronan *versus* M'Ronan—Remmy against Patrick—and Patrick against Remmy. In every possible way in which the question could be tried it *was* tried. By every exertion

of talent, and every effort of chicanery, the claims of the respective litigants were twisted, and turned, and contorted—but nothing could make either straight, for they serpentined in a crooked path ! At last all was ruined—all gone. Each brother had, in his turn, been a dozen times the possessor or the outcast from his paternal mansion—for one had as good a right as the other to claim paternity until it was disproved. In law, at any rate, they were both the sons of Phelim M'Ronan. Opposing decrees and verdicts, confirmatory or upsetting sentences from higher courts, appeals without end, and judgments without effect, were accumulated in this memorable contest, in a magnificence of confusion that put all other causes to the blush.

But at length the contest *was* terminated, as my readers know how—by the utter exhaustion of funds, and the total alienation of the property from the hands of the joint heirs to the calamities it entailed. Of the two sons, both reduced to beggary, one emigrated to America, the other

remained in Ireland. The first with the hope of forgetting his bad fortunes, and perhaps of acquiring good ones; the second with a lingering notion that still, by being on the watch, some lucky trump might turn up, though the game seemed done, and without calculating, it would seem, by what hand the cards were next to be played. This one, and I know not if it was Patrick or Remmy, was the one I saw, a pensioner of assize on the half yearly bounty of the barristers who for years had fattened on his earthly all—and in that capacity alone, I believe I may say, a very unusual, if not totally unique, specimen of his species.

THE

MAISON DE SANTÉ.

THE

MAISON DE SANTÉ.

CHAPTER I.

I HAD finished a long mountain ramble, not a great distance from one of the southern seaports of France, and I was on the point of entering the town which had for some hours bounded my view, when a large house, at a short distance from the road, caught my attention. I was more particularly attracted by a board affixed to the top of the handsome cast-iron gates, and on which were painted, in huge letters, (wor-

thy of the largest metropolis in Europe, let alone the provincial capital before me), the words which I have placed at the head of this page—

"MAISON DE SANTÉ."

There was something extremely soothing and inviting in this appellation. Not that I felt myself ill; but I was fatigued. I had overwalked myself; and I was a little out of conceit with my excursion, from having met with nothing beyond the common course of those events which *any* tourist might have fallen in with. I either wanted repose, or thought I wanted it—which is just the same thing, and it suddenly occurred to me to try the gentle accommodations of this "house of health," instead of encountering the bustle of a hotel.

I knew that establishments of this description were common in France, for the reception of real or fancied invalids, where actual convalescence or imaginary illness found attention and

relief. My ideas of a *maison de santé* were as distinct as possible from those we attach to an hospital. I imagined nothing of the loathsomeness of disease nor the danger of contagion—and so far I judged rightly; but there is another signification attached to the name, of which I was ignorant, till experience taught it to me, in the painful way I am about to relate.

As soon as it occurred to me to make this house of promise my resting-place for a time, I proceeded to its external examination. I quitted the road, and walked round the tolerably large extent of the premises, which were completely enclosed within a high wall, above which were to be seen the roofs of some of the offices, as well as that of a detached house, of much smaller dimensions than the principal one, which seemed to occupy the centre of the garden, for all around it appeared the tops of fruit-trees in full blossom; and, closer to the wall, rows of flowering limes and graceful poplars promised a fresh and fragrant shade.

"What an enviable retreat," thonght I, "to the valetudinarian or the philosopher! Sheltered in those delicious walks, and free from the world's intrusion, how happily might the time glide away!" and I forthwith resolved to seek the entrance, and apply for a temporary admission to the quiet enjoyments I was picturing to myself. The iron gate, to which I before alluded, was flanked with a lofty and highly ornamented railing, of the same workmanship, extending for several yards at either side. The devices were richly wrought, and displayed various initial letters turned backwards and forwards through each other, with coronets and heraldic signs in open work. The place had evidently belonged to some noble family, which was apparently superseded by the doctor's whose salubrious announcement hung above; and the professional taste of the actual possessor was displayed in the addition of various bronze serpents, twisting through the aristocratical ornaments before mentioned. This emblem of medi-

cal occupation, intruding on the noble and chivalrous associations around it, seemed to my mind like the devil gliding into Paradise; and I looked from it to the court-yard in front of the house, and then to the house itself. The space before and about the mansion was wide and straggling, and the solemn looking pile of building spoke its ancient importance. It was of that heavy and woe-inspiring style of architecture common to the châteaux of France, and one of those incongruous contrasts to the spirit and temper of the people, which are not the less surprising from being so frequent.

"This place," thought I, "is, after all, not so pleasant. The very look of that dull stone mass is enough to give one the vapours. I believe I shall not attempt to penetrate further;" and I was on the point of turning away towards the town, when a middle-aged, fat, comely woman came forwards to the gate through which I was making my *reconnoissance*, and,

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with a courteous, but still a hurried, manner, she spoke to me through the railing.

"Pray, wait a little, Sir," said she, smiling. "I suppose you want to see the doctor: you shall see him in a moment—the porter will shew you into the house presently. You will find things a little confused; but I beg you to excuse that. I have a shocking set of servants—they don't obey my orders in the least: indeed I am quite afraid of them—they treat me as if every thing was theirs, not mine! Here comes one of them—the insolent porter;" and she turned quickly away, throwing a look which seemed of mingled fear and anger at the rough-looking fellow who advanced towards me. He, in his turn, sent after her a glance of insolent severity; and then addressed me with fawning civility, requesting to know my business, and at the same time unlocking the gate and removing a ponderous bar by which it was also secured.

I told him that my object had not much of *business* in it ; and as I entered the court-yard, somewhat marvelling at the security which guarded it, I briefly explained that if I could procure accommodation in the house for a week or so, I was disposed to take up my quarters there. He replied that he had no doubt such an arrangement might be made, and begged leave to conduct me to the doctor's study, where I should have an opportunity of learning every particular as to terms and conditions from the head master of the establishment.

" But cannot your mistress, there, settle the affair with me ?" asked I.

" My mistress !"

" Yes ; that lady, who accosted me just now : is not she the mistress of the house ?"

" No, Sir."

" Indeed ! why, she told me as much as that she was."

" I dare say she did."

" Who is she, then? and what did she mean by speaking as if the place were her own?"

" This is the way to the doctor's study, Sir," said my guide, cutting short my interrogatories, and leading up a narrow passage, which was terminated by a door covered with green baize. As we arrived at this entrance, the face of the fat lady looked ruddily in upon me from a little window opening on the court-yard, and she winked at me, significantly but unintelligibly, making use of various gestures, the meaning of which I could not divine. The porter soon perceived her, and instantly put her to flight by a frown of fierce meaning, while his hand seemed clenched mechanically, and a suppressed stamp echoed through the passage. No time was left me for astonishment, for the porter's tap at the door was answered by an immediate invitation to enter, and I found myself in an instant ushered into the presence of the doctor himself.

He eyed me closely and quickly, to discover my complaint, I suppose; but his scrutinizing gaze found no symptoms of malady, and he politely offered me a seat, and resumed his own, putting on an air of attention to what I might be about to say. I soon relieved his anxiety, if he felt any, by proposing to become his lodger for a week on his own terms, and clearly explaining that I did not require his professional care, but was merely desirous of retirement and repose.

"Aha!" said the over-quicksighted doctor, "I see what it is—a literary man! You want solitude, Sir, to finish some work—isn't it so? Yes, yes; your countrymen are great tourists and great writers: you, no doubt, require information as to our cathedral and the Roman ruins in yonder suburb—would you examine the manuscripts in the library, and inquire into the antique remains in which our town is so rich? Well, Sir, you have fallen in a lucky place—if any man could aid your learned re-

searches, I am he! I love literature and science, and am not myself unknown in the World of Letters! As a physician I have studied much: chemistry, botany, geology, pathology, and physiology are, of course, at my fingers' ends—comparative anatomy is like my A, B, C—astronomy is just as familiar to me as mathematics; but metaphysics are *my passion!* Yes, I confess to you that all the material attributes of nature, in her thousand modifications, have no charms for me in comparison with the sublime and abstract speculations of the mind! The doctrine of the general affections, and that alone, is worthy of exciting the enthusiasm of genius! It rarefies and refines the soul, and fits us for the exercise of those benevolent duties which man owes to man, and which are my sole inducements to the profession which I practise! —Eh! what do I see? What the devil's that? Michel, Michel, Michel!" abruptly vociferated the doctor, snapping the chain of his eloquence, violently ringing a little bell, and

making bustling preparations to quit the room. While he twisted his brown Brutus wig into a proper position, and pulled on his purple silk dressing-gown, which had lain on a chair beside him, the porter (the said Michel) rushed into the room.

"This is a pretty business, Michel—this is your care, is it? Look yonder at the general's son, again making love to the countess! Fly out into the garden, and seize him! Prepare the leeches and a strong blister instantly—I will be with you in a moment!"

The surly dog looked aghast at the first part of this announcement, and grinned a frightful grin of enjoyment at the orders which followed. He darted away, and the doctor after him, seemingly forgetful or indifferent to my presence.

And left thus alone, I was really far from feeling at my ease. I thought I had fallen amongst a very queer set, and scarcely knew what to make of them. I moved towards the

window which looked out on the garden, and as I passed the table at which the doctor had been writing, my eye caught the loose pages of a printed book, with corrections and erasures, the whole in that state of interesting incompleteness which experience afterwards taught me was technically peculiar to *proof sheets*. I read the title, which was as follows—

MAN AND METAPHYSICS;

OR,

THE RIDDLE RESOLVED.

BY

ŒDIPUS SECUNDUS.

And the next page, which seemed introductory, began with a part of the very speech which the doctor had just delivered to me: "The doctrine of the general affections, and that alone, is worthy of exciting the enthusiasm of genius," *et cetera* — and that much satisfied me; I turned to the window, and looking out to the

garden, perceived a very mild and interesting looking lad, in apparently playful conversation with a tall and showy woman, in a fashionable morning déshabillé. Not being as well versed in the science of the general affections as the ontological doctor, I should not of myself have discovered that this youth had been love-making; but be his occupation what it might, it soon received a very violent interruption. Michel, the porter, came forward with most malicious speed, and flew upon the youthful gallant, who shuddered and turned pale, as the ruffian approached and rudely seized him by the collar. The doctor was in a moment on the scene of action, and he furiously pushed the countess, as he called her, for some paces off the gravel walk, and then turned to the young man, and, aided by Michel, led him towards the house, which stood fragrantly sheltered in the middle of the garden. My blood seemed, at one and the same time, to freeze with surprise, and boil with indignation. I followed the doctor and

his myrmidon with my eyes, and was only restrained from rushing out, by the fear that my premature interference might be of injury, instead of service. "What!" exclaimed I, aloud, "is this a specimen of the benevolence which is this vile hypocrite's only inducement to follow his profession!"

"Benevolence, indeed!" said a voice, close to me, in a tone of irony, and a very odd sort of chuckle closed the exclamation. I looked round, and saw "my fat friend" standing beside the window. "Benevolence!" repeated she, "no, he has none of that quality, depend on it. He is a tyrant of the worst stamp; and God help you for having fallen into his clutches! your life isn't safe an hour. Didn't I wink at you as you came along the passage, as much as to tell you not to come in? But now, that you are here, take care of yourself! See how they have used me; a slave in my own house. But the prime minister has an eye on them, and I shall have my revenge yet!"

"For God's sake," asked I, impatiently, "what are they about to do to that poor young man? What is the meaning of all this?"

"To do with him! what they will do with you, poor thing, by and by—to bleed and blister him half dead, and then put—"

"Holloa, holloa! Madame!" cried the doctor, springing forward from the shrubbery, "what are you about there, eh? Ha, ha! Is this the work you are at? To your room instantly! and Michel, I say, prepare the shower bath for this lady. Be off, Madame, you are too fat!"

"Heavens!" said I, as the lady waddled off, the doctor at her heels, and Michel close to them — "heavens! what tyranny is this! a house of *health*, indeed! What! blisters and bleeding for politeness—and a shower-bath for too much fat! Let me fly this horrid den!" And I snatched up my hat, and attempted to open the door; but my blood seemed to run the

wrong way in my veins, on my finding that it was firmly fastened on the outside.

Before I had time enough granted me to indulge in the apprehensions which such a situation might have excited, I heard the cheerful sounds of the key grating through the intricacies of the lock; and in a moment the doctor was before me, and the door briskly closed behind him. Not wishing to betray any appearance of uneasiness to whomsoever might enter, I had retreated towards the table; and when the doctor came in, he found me in apparent carelessness, looking over his books.

"My dear Sir," cried he, with an air of sneaking civility, "I ask a thousand pardons for my inadvertence. I really locked the door unconsciously, as I went out to punish that refractory and furious young man—such is the force of habit. I am obliged to keep most of my patients under lock and key."

"But not your *lodgers*, doctor, I hope?"

"And a troublesome set they are, I assure you," continued he, heedless of my interruption. "You may see how I am tormented. Such is my reward at present, for unceasing endeavours to promote the health and happiness of my fellow creatures! But here, Sir," pointing to the *proof sheets*—"here is the immortal recompense for all. This great work which I am now about to give to the world, this treatise on the true analogy between mind and matter, is the unfading remuneration for days and nights of care and study. To hand my name down to posterity as a benefactor of mankind is to me—"

At this moment the cadaverous phiz of Michel appeared at the door. He beckoned the doctor, who quickly joined him; and the porter said, in a half suppressed voice, but still loud enough for me to hear it,

"The old priest is outrageous at his dinner. He exclaims against the fish, which he says is

rotten, and protests that the soup is *lengthened out** beyond all endurance."

"The old scoundrel!" muttered the doctor. "Give him dry bread for supper; and if he dares to murmur, clap on the *camisole*."

The ready porter nodded a cheerful assent, and the doctor turned towards me with a smile.

"Another interruption!" exclaimed he. "It is thus my most agreeable moments are continually broken in upon"—and the compliment was accompanied by a cringing bow. "One of my poor hypochondriacs, a religious enthusiast, just sent a message to me."

"What a pleasure it must be to you," said I, with a severe emphasis, "to have the care of the old and ailing, and the power to smooth their sufferings, whether they be of fact or imagination."

"Yes, indeed it is," answered he, with a deep

* *La soupe allongée* is a very common phrase for that which is very plentifully *watered* to meet the calls of additional consumers.

sigh; "and the consciousness of doing my duty towards them is my only return for time and trouble, and, I must say, for the ingratitude that nine-tenths of them give me. You would scarcely believe," continued he, while his hypocrisy put me in a fever of indignation, "that this immense establishment is a dead loss to me. No profit, no comfort, and but little thanks for vast sacrifices, although I have sixty patients within these walls."

"Sixty!" exclaimed I, with an involuntary shudder, at imagining the quantum of misery which must be daily dealt out to those wretches —"Sixty! and pray what may be the nature of their chief complaints?"

"Oh—I scarcely know what to call it exactly —but nervousness, perhaps, explains it better than any other word. In fact, your own complaint, my dear Sir."

"*My* complaint!" said I, briskly; "what do you mean? I have no complaint—I never was better in my life."

"So you think, my good Sir; but believe me you are deceiving yourself. I see the agitated state of your nerves, and know your sensations better than you possibly can. The very fact of your voluntarily seeking this asylum is a proof that nature was making a collateral effort, as we may call it, for relief. A man in sound health would not have been instinctively prompted to come here."

"In his sound *senses*," thought I.

"But trust to my care," continued the doctor, "and I will soon bring you about. Moderate diet, gentle exercise, tepid baths, with my celebrated ptisan, and a couple of months here, will restore the true tone, both moral and physical. You may, at your leisure, continue your work; and treat of what it may, history, science, or statistics, depend upon me for ample information. You will want no library while I am at hand. Let me feel your pulse."

I rejected the proffered pressure of his fingers. and shrunk from him altogether; and the words

of the fat lady seemed to ring in my ears. I could not help feeling as if I had got into the cell of a magician, whose very words could conjure up a flight of evil spirits. Then the aspect of his odious familiar, Michel the porter, flitted before me, and I fancied the many of that stamp which must be at his call. I did not exactly like my situation, but I felt a wild sort of curiosity to know more of the place and its inmates, and I at once resolved to feign assent to the doctor's opinion of *my case*, although I knew it would be hard to deceive the cunning, which had stamped the proofs of nearly half a century's practice on his sallow visage. After a pause of apparent reflection, I said—and I thought, as I spoke, that vanity was the outwork in which a breach was most practicable —

"I really don't know how it is, doctor, but I believe I *am* a little out of order. What talents you must possess! I never should have known I was ill but for your ready perception. I thought I was only fatigued, but I do believe

there is something gone wrong in the nervous machinery. There is my wrist for you."

He took hold of the wrist accordingly, and having felt it for some minutes, he shook his head, and gravely exclaimed, though evidently elated by my ready assent, and the respect he thought he had inspired—

"Ay, ay, 'tis even as I thought; but a few ounces of blood taken away, and a slight blister laid on, will soon set all to rights." The prophetic words of the fat lady again came to my mind, and I started away from the doctor's grasp. My abruptness caused a corresponding start in him, and a fierce and authoritative frown curled as if in habitual motion over his bushy brows. I was put quite on my mettle; and I said, in a calm, but very determined way,

"Now I'll tell you what, my good doctor, you and I must understand each other. I wish much to stay for a short time in your house, not for the *month* you talked of, but for a week, or perhaps two. I have a profound opinion of

your talents—I am even willing to believe myself not quite well, since you tell me I am not, but you cannot persuade me I am *ill*, and depend upon it you shall not treat me as if I were. Your tepid baths and ptisans I adopt—your blistering and bleeding I reject—a retired and quiet bed-room is all I ask—I require but little attendance—I will dine at your family table—I shall profit by your society, although I am not an author — but Heaven knows what my fate *may*, some time or another, make me! I want none of your abstruse knowledge or occult research—I study but little, and when at all, it is chiefly what one of our poets calls the 'proper study of mankind' — I prefer nature to books, and man to mathematics, or metaphysics either, doctor. I think I may find some odd specimens here, and I give you your own terms."

"Well, well, Sir, agreed: it is a bargain," said the doctor. "Heaven knows, I don't want more patients, and I hold profit in scorn; but an agreeable companion and a man of taste—"

" Don't drive me away, my good doctor, to prove my right to this premature praise. Give me a little time and fair play, and we shall get on very well, I have no doubt. Pray order some one to shew me to my room, and send for my portmanteau to the office of the *diligence*. Here is my passport—and now, good day, until your dinner hour."

Whether he was pleased with, or imposed on by the off-hand way in which this was spoken, I could not exactly tell; but he shook my hand with apparent cordiality, and assured me that every thing should be done in my own way. He then rang a bell, and a good featured, olive-coloured woman entered, with a bunch of keys at her girdle.

" This is my housekeeper," said the doctor. " Madame Jacqueline, you will please to give every attention to this gentleman. Place him in a quiet good room, in the eastern wing, and follow his directions in all things."

Madame Jacqueline made a silent and assent-

ing inclination of the head, and I quitted the study after her. Tracing the way she led me, I was soon installed in a very neat apartment at the top of the house; and in a short time a male attendant provided me with every thing necessary for my comfort.

CHAPTER II.

My readers will by this time discover, although I really did not, till afterwards, that I had fixed myself in a private madhouse. In reading the circumstances as I have sketched them, the fact will soon speak for itself; but in the *occurrence* of those events there was an indistinctness and confusion that did not so soon bring conviction. But this is always the case. The reader of a recital is ever on the watch for something surprising or remarkable; while in acting the very scene we afterwards describe, we are unprepared for what is coming; and a hundred little transactions, omitted in the narration,

weaken the impression of facts as they happen, by diverting our attention, and consequently rendering it less acute. The over scrupulous delicacy of the French language, too, had helped to keep *me* in the dark on this occasion. What foreigner could suppose that "a house of health" meant a madhouse? It does so, however; on the same principle that a "*monarchie pure*" means a despotism. But the reader must please for a while to consider me ignorant of the precise nature of my quarters, and make allowance for my dulness, in having supposed them of a much less questionable and more lucid kind.

Having arranged my small stock of moveables in the drawers, and on the tables of my chamber, which pleased me much by its airy and retired position, I walked down stairs, for the purpose of taking a turn in the garden, finding that I had still half an hour to spare before dinner, which I learned from my attendant was fixed for four o'clock. Just as I stepped out of the house, the warning sounds of a bell, rung by

the porter, gave notice—not that it was dressing time — but that the already toiletted convalescents might come forth for their promenade, and gain half an hour's extra appetite. And out they came accordingly from various quarters of the mansion, some slipping from the *corps de logis*, like young kangaroos from their mother's bosom, others emerging from *the wings*, east and west, like ducklings or chickens from their feathered shelter. But I did not perceive any to appear from the direction of the smaller house, which peeped dimly through the foliage of its verdant screen.

I was greatly amused at marking the various groups of these hypochondriacs, as I set them all down in my mind. I reckoned thirty-two or thirty-three altogether, male and female. They were of all ages, from puberty to caducity; and appeared, by their costume, to be of various conditions in life, from the plain-dressed *bourgeois* to the richly-clad noble. I could not fail to be struck with the remarkable care displayed

in the appearance of every individual, whether young or old. Age, *certain* or *uncertain*, had evidently little control over the most natural failing of humanity; and I should have begun to moralize on the variegated aspect of vanity, blooming in the very atmosphere of disease, had I been able to snatch time from the personal inspection of its votaries. They crossed and re-crossed me, however, too rapidly, to let me do more than hastily remark them. The variety of expression in their countenances caught my particular attention, but the more so, because there seemed to be one particular look common to them all, let the general differences have been ever so marked. Although "there was no speculation in their eyes," they had, every one of them, the same kind of abstracted look, which is common to the profoundest speculators. Their minds seemed all abroad; and I thought I might have knocked at every individual pate, without finding any one at home. Their glances appeared seeking for news, but

quite innocent of intelligence. In short, had my reader gazed at them as I did, without knowing as much of them as he now does, he would have been, without doubt, as puzzled and perplexed as I myself was. But they paid back my stare of surprise by a very mortifying look of suspicion. Every one of them seemed to shun me, as a community of wild animals, of any genus, shrinks from an intruder on their pasture. Some of them were dull, silent, and sluggish; others vivacious and talkative. The first sort gloomed past me, with protuberant eyes and a semicircular avoidance of the place I stood on; the latter, and by far most numerous kind, whispered volubly together, threw piercing glances at me, came up close, and then suddenly darted off in all directions, like globules of quicksilver at each other's repulsion; and it only wanted a little neighing and snorting, to convince me that the spirits of so many Houyhnms had transmigrated into these groups of human bodies.

Ten minutes of discomfort had passed in this way, when I was delighted to perceive the fat lady enter the garden, from a low building, which was labelled in its various compartments with the titles of different kinds of baths. The sight of a face that I had seen before was quite consoling. I stepped quickly forward to address the new comer, and was glad to perceive a correspondent alacrity on her part. She had burst upon my sight like the bubbling spring to a traveller in the desert, and the simile was not unapt to her actual appearance;

"Loose were her tresses seen, her zone unbound."

But she was in the act of twisting up the one with her right hand, and fastening the other with her left; and as she squeezed her thick dark hair under her cap (for she was habited *en bourgeoise*, that is to say, without a bonnet,) the water oozed out of it profusely. I cannot say that she seemed exactly modelled on the plan of the Venus Aphrodite, but there was an air of

freshness and vivacity in her rosy cheeks and rapid eye that was not unpleasing, and which spoke the vivifying effects of the shower-bath, from which she had just emerged. To judge, however, by the difficulty with which she buckled her ribbon-belt, the fleshly profusion with which the doctor reproached her, was not decreased by his remedy.

"Hush!" said she, seeing I was about to accost her, "step into the shrubbery here, and I will meet you from the other side."

The diplomatic mixture of mystery and cunning with which this was said, made me think my new acquaintance had more brains than I had given her credit for; and I was determined to "cultivate" her, for the sake of the fertile crop of information which she seemed to promise. I accordingly took a turn or two among the promenades on the broad gravel walk in front of the house; and then, with a somewhat abstracted air, to look less singular than before, I lounged, in apparent carelessness,

into the deep shade of laurel and myrtle trees, which formed the hedge of one of the alleys. It was then and there that the first misgivings crept upon me, as to the true nature of the herd I had mixed with. I thought it impossible that so many odd-looking creatures could have been affected, as they all evidently were, from the mere effects of *nervousness*, unless that term was meant to imply the mental aberration which I thought I had perceived. But the appearance of the fat lady, at the far end of the walk, put an end to my cogitations, and her very first words finished my doubts.

"Well, my friend," said she, solemnly, and in an under tone, "you have escaped so far; but the *lettre de cachet* is out—beware of yourself! The prime minister never deceives me. Your dungeon will be damp enough, by and by."

This very horrifying speech put me quite at my ease; and I hope there was nothing unnatural in my being absolutely pleased at the

conviction which it brought to me. I was satisfied that I had straggled into the recesses of a Lunatic Asylum; and it being the first time in my life that I had entered such a place, I felt infinite satisfaction in the opportunity afforded me of seeing the workings of the mind, in an aspect at once so new and so interesting. I had no sensation of personal apprehension, for it was clear that the doctor was satisfied of the error of his first notion, that I might have required his professional care; and, as to any idea of coercion, even if it had crossed my mind, the burlesque denunciations of the fat lady would have removed it, as one poison counteracts the effects of another.

I resolved to take my new friend and her hints quite in her own way; and to receive with no apocryphal hesitation any thing she might say. I was, therefore, about to assume an air of alarm and credulity, and to say something in reply to her address; but a sudden flight from fiction to reality, and a rapid change of subject,

brought her to a point of real interest to me, and saved me all my intended acting.

"He is *there*," said she, impressively, and pointing to the garden-house, which was partly visible through the trees and shrubs; "they have him safe enough."

"Who?" asked I, impatiently.

"Why, Vincent de Bouverie, to be sure," answered she; "the young man you saw dragged away a while ago. There they have him, the wretches! and a sad place it is for the unhappy youth. He is, by this time, fainting to death, I'll warrant it. They have left just blood enough in his veins to make him revive for new tortures. And his beautiful hair, which was just beginning to curl again, is, no doubt, again shorn close enough for the frightful blisters—ay, and it's very likely he has once more got on the *camisole!*"

"And, pray, what is the *camisole?*" demanded I.

"The *straight-waistcoat!*" said she, with a

hollow and sepulchral tone, while she grasped my arm, and shuddered as she spoke, and looked round, as if the recollection of something shocking had conjured up the very thing itself.

"You are surprised," continued she, "that I know the English for that word, but there is not a language in Europe in which I do not know its meaning. I once had it on myself—and my father died in it—he dashed his head against the wall of the cell, to which a *lettre de cachet* had consigned him!—and they robbed me of all, the brutes! even this house! You see how they treat me—but the prime minister is not sleeping all this time."

There was a mixture of the terrible and ludicrous, more in her manner than her words, that made me at once tremble and smile. But the wild abruptness of her transitions gave me no time to dwell on what she said.

"Poor fellow!" continued she, looking towards the small house, and seemingly forgetful

of all personal or parental sufferings—" poor Vincent! they'll soon gain their object by getting him out of the world, and then the second brother will come quietly in for all. And as for the countess—"

" Do tell me who is the countess?" said I, somewhat anxious for information as to the cause of poor Vincent's punishment.

" That's more than I can do, for nobody here knows even her name."

" And where is she? I do not see her in the garden."

" I believe not, indeed; she is ordered a ten hours' penance in a tepid bath — but it is not so bad as that ten minutes torture of mine!"

I thought this an exaggeration of my angry informant, but I ascertained afterwards it was quite true. Ten hours in a bath! and such a *remedy* (to take it in its best point of view) at the discretion of any individual! But that is a trifle to what I afterwards learned of the discipline of " a house of health."

"I believe there is an old priest confined here?" asked I, recollecting the doctor's whisperings with Michel, and shocked at the explanation I had so recently received of the word *camisole*, particularly as it applied to him.

"What, old Father Louis, who fancies himhimself the Pope, and the garden house St. Peter's cathedral? Yes, he is *there*—and if you walk out after dinner, you may hear him singing vespers, if they haven't put the gag between his toothless jaws. But I beg your pardon, Sir—it is almost dinner time, and I expect a letter from the prime minister. So pray excuse me—Good morning, Sir—I wish you a very good morning, Sir—good morning."

These last words were half a dozen times repeated, in a tone of most whimsical formality, and accompanied by a succession of courtesies down to the ground, which continued so long (as the fat lady retreated backwards up the alley) that to save her from her dignified civilities and myself from the chance of laughing in her face,

I wheeled suddenly round, and left her to herself.

There seemed an irresistible attraction leading me towards the mysterious building, which imagination, wedded to the vague revelations of the wild creature I had just parted from, quickly peopled with a strange tenantry. Of sixty patients spoken of by the doctor, I had scarcely seen more than half. "Where and *what* are the others?" thought I; "several of them *there*, no doubt, in that sink of cruelty and suffering. If these walls could but speak—and these barred windows send out the secrets of this prison! But they *shall* find tongues, at least, if I can gain entrance there."

As I thus soliloquized, I stood before the low front of this sad residence. It was dreary and gloomy looking; every window protected by strong bars of iron; and an air of woful solitude breathing around it. The high trees and closely planted shrubs completely shut out the sunbeams, that were so brightly shining on

all other parts of the garden. Nothing moved in this obscurity, but a lonely peacock, whose drooping plumage seemed affected by the shade he sauntered in, and suddenly, as if to *harmonize* with all around, and with the feelings I experienced, the bird opened out his throat, and sent forth screams of such sad discord, as might fitly wail the wrecks of reason and happiness within the walls they pierced through. The scene was overpowering; and I never felt more relief than when the dinner bell pealed out its voluble summons, and called me hastily away.

As I proceeded towards the house, a servant, in a gaudy livery, with a napkin in his hand, came to seek for and conduct me to the refectory; and I was met at the door, which opened into the garden, by the doctor himself and two younger gentlemen, whom he presented to me as the assistant physicians of his establishment. One of these was a tall, sinister-looking, sallow-complexioned fellow, of about thirty-five; the

other a dapper, fresh-coloured, dandyish youth, full ten years younger. Ushered into the dining-room, where I perceived a table laid for full forty persons, I took the place pointed out to me by the doctor at his right hand, and I found that my next neighbour was an excessively beautiful young woman, whom I had not observed among the loungers in the garden. Opposite to me sat the sallow-complexioned doctor, and next to him the fat lady. The rest of the large party were quickly seated; the housekeeper on an elevated chair exactly in the centre of one of the sides, with a huge tureen before her, a napkin carefully pinned up to the top of her tucker, and a large silver ladle in her hand, I saw that the operations of carving were meant to be executed particularly by her, in the way common to *table d'hôte* mistresses of the ceremonies.

The soup and the *bouilli* were served amidst a nearly general silence; and while the first course was placed upon the table I had leisure to observe the whole style of the entertainment. No-

thing could be better appointed, as far as solid quantities of plate, and all the accessories of a dinner-service were concerned. The numerous dishes were brought to the door by the assistants of the *chef de cuisine*, or head cook, and received by Michel the porter, and three other men, all habited in rich but tasteless liveries, while a couple of neatly dressed women stood at as many side tables, prepared to carry off the plates, spoons, *et cetera*, as fast as they were used. When the whole service of *entremets*, *ragoûts*, and *fricassées* were served up, I observed the chief cook put his white-capped head into the room, and after an inquiring look at what, for courtesy-sake, we will call the *arrangement* of the table, the aforesaid head shook a gracious nod of approbation, and disappeared. But *I* could not avoid being struck, and was, in spite of myself, annoyed, at the total absence of all order or method in the setting out of the many excellent things, and the wretched taste displayed in the management of such materials for a really

handsome repast. The knives, forks, and spoons, glasses, bottles, plates, and dishes, were all huddled together at random, shewing no more regard than Lady Macbeth wished to see in her guests as to "the order of their going or *coming*." The dishes were of different dimensions, and dropped upon the table in any *dis*order that might happen. The most practised mathematician would have been puzzled to produce the simplest combination out of such a confusion of figures as presented itself. Every thing was at sixes and sevens; and the amazing inconsistency of French manners and habits again exemplified most fully.

Never did any horse in a mill labour more pertinaciously in its round of duty than did the indefatigable housekeeper in the monotonous exercise of hers. Every dish on the table was successively placed before her, and every person supplied by her hand. The rapidity, the skilfulness, the patience she displayed were all wonderful. Plate after plate was popped in under her left elbow

by one expert attendant, and, after receiving its portion, passed out under her right arm into the hand of another, with a dexterity that might have raised a blush on the wrists of Whippee-Snippee, or Ram-Jam-Tossaway, the Indian jugglers. The accurate measurement of the housekeeper's eye was only equalled by her steadiness of hand. We were exactly thirty-six at table. Every individual dish, by which I mean the *contents* of each dish, were divided into thirty-six parts, with an equality on which might have been modelled an agrarian division of any thing, from a tract of swamp in the Illinois territory to the lumps of assafœtida meant for pills on an apothecary's counter. My anxiety was, at times, quite painful for the responsibility of the housekeeper's situation; as, for instance, when five stewed and larded pigeons came, in their turn, for dissection. "How the deuce," thought I—and I suspended for a minute or two my operations on the segment of a *fricandeau*, just big enough to give shelter to the

points of my fork, with about a dessert spoonful of the mashed sorrel which enveloped it, and which had come to me as my share—" how the deuce can she fairly partition those five pigeons? It would have bothered the spoliators of Poland!" But before I had time to attempt a calculation, the thing was done; and I had but a moment allowed me to swallow my tantalizing morsel of *fricandeau*, when my plate was snapped away, and another darted before me, with about the third part of a thigh, a head, and a piece of skin of one of the identical pigeons, for my portion, while the knife of the carver was merrily working away upon the fleshy jowl of a *tête de veau au naturel*, which was rapidly disappearing in atoms before her—and I verily believe she did not spill even one drop of gravy from first to last.

Thus the dinner went on, reversing every English notion of precedence; for the first service seemed to follow the second, and though the *rôti* certainly succeeded the *ragoût*, yet the

fish superseded the flesh, the vegetables and sweet things came all together alone by themselves, as we say in Ireland; and the dessert, including the cheese, brought up the rear-guard of the army of edibles, which, though served *en masse*, was annihilated in detail: not a scrap escaped—every bone was polished—every atom consumed! The quantity was really prodigious, the quality excellent; but I never made so bad a dinner. I had been uncommonly hungry, from the effects of several hours' walk, and I did ample justice to every little specimen set before me; but each was *so* diminutive, so tantalizing, so insufficient, that twenty times, during the meal, all my predilections for French cookery seemed to evaporate, and I heartily longed for a boiled leg of mutton, a round of beef, or an Irish stew. When all was over, I could not help acknowledging that, though still unsatisfied, I had had *enough*—but not of that kind, or in that way, which makes it "as good as a feast." There was but little wine

drunk, and, I believe, I had more of *that* than came fairly to my share, thanks to its being out of the control of the housekeeper's apportionment. As for her, poor devil, she did not eat or drink bit or sup; but no alderman, after a corporation feast, could have suffered more from *his* exertions. The curse of Adam was upon her brow most profusely: she panted for breath, and, with the aid of her napkin, succeeded (like her sex in general) in giving herself airs; while her olive-coloured cheeks and forehead gained a brighter hue from her labours, and she seemed to have *gilt* herself in proportion as she had *carved* for others.

But I had not been so completely occupied with observations on the *matériel* of the repast, or the operations of the chief actor, as to be wholly unobservant of the less prominent persons, or of the minor proceedings that were at work. I had my eye, at intervals, on every one of the party, and I was sometimes enabled, as all my readers have many a time been, to

take an observation of several at once, and even to be sharply looking, with a ramification of vision, in a direction out of the line of my apparent view. The lady at my right hand was an object of particular attention: she was, as I have said, very beautiful, and her dress was in the most elegant and tasteful style of *négligé*. Her whole manner, in all the little management of knife and fork, and those other minutiæ of self-service, which are so eloquent as to the habits of the doer, convinced me that she was no common person. She had also an air of what appeared, at first, reserve, but which soon shewed itself to be melancholy, that began by commanding my respect, and ended by exciting my compassion. I made several attempts to lead her into conversation; but she did not even give me a reply—a silent inclination of the head gave either assent or refusal to my offers of service or my efforts at discourse; and, more frequently than either, she shewed a total inattention to what I said, and looked on the table

with eyes that seemed fixed upon some object distant beyond all measurement.

From time to time I looked at the others, but saw nothing half as remarkable as I expected to find. There is something so universally levelling in the act of eating—appetite is such a polisher of the differences that distinguish mortals from each other—that even the freaks of insanity are merged in the universal instinct which sets the jaws a-working, and all the developments of brain are for a while suspended, to give the palate uninterrupted play. I suppose it was from this cause that I saw so little extraordinary in the bearing of the mad folk at table. Perhaps the lynx-eyed observation of the doctor had its effect in suppressing any incipient inclination to pass the bounds of strict and common-place propriety, if such for a moment rose up in the fancies of the convalescents. As it was, I might certainly have gone through the whole repast without seeing any thing beyond the dull decorum of good

sense, and have got up from table supposing its duties to have entirely absorbed the whole party, had not a little *mistake* on the part of an individual mischievously whispered me that there might be much going on under the table-cloth which was unknown even to the table it covered.

Very soon after the soup had been removed, and the house-keeper's operations had commenced in solid earnest, and while I was in the act of addressing a sentence of civility to the interesting girl beside me, I felt something gently touch the point of one of my feet with a very light pressure. I did not pay any attention to it at first, and on a repetition of the touch, I concluded that a cat was passing to and fro under the table. After a very short interval, however, it came again, and there was something so intelligible in the feel of the thing and in the language it spoke, that I thought *mere* animal agency could not alone have caused it. The fact of the case came across my mind

with a quickness and clearness that shewed, as I thought, a considerable aptitude on my part: I was convinced in a moment that the sallow-visaged doctor was sending his long legs on an embassy from the other side of the table, and that his grisly foot believed itself in the act of making a very tender impression on the instep of my beautiful neighbour. My determination was instantly formed to encourage the doctor's error, to personate, with the point of my foot, the moiety of one of those no-doubt delicate ones for which it was mistaken, and to amuse myself by observing those secret workings of the doctor's *sole*, which, I thought, if properly managed by me, would be likely to display themselves in his countenance.

In pursuance of this freak, the consequences of which I little foresaw, as my readers will believe when they learn them, I quietly slipped my foot out of its shoe, the better to counterfeit feminine delicacy; and advancing it softly towards that of the doctor, which had retreated

after his last attempt, I gently touched the tip of his great toe with mine. While I did so, I turned again towards the lady on whom I was committing this personal forgery, and though saying a few words to her, I marked, by a single glance, the effect of my first step in this under-foot affair. The doctor's look had been lowering and disappointed, at the little sympathy excited by *his* first pressure; but no sooner did he feel the timid touch which I essayed, than a frightful expression of delight shewed itself on his face. An odious streakiness overspread his cheeks, the livid veins of his temples swelled almost to bursting, his lip quivered with a convulsive tremor, and his glowering eyes seemed to float in bile. The look of sickening softness which he rolled across the table, was enough to infect the delicate things it passed over, like the poison blast that desolates the gardens of Araby.

I was utterly disgusted with the fellow, but I did not the less amuse myself with him. For

full half an hour I played him, as an angler plays a salmon, forward and backward, from one side to the other; sometimes luring him on, then letting him retreat; now suffering his foot gently to press mine, then giving his a squeeze on the most sensitive and corny part, and on these occasions I could mark on his lips the anguish which he was, martyrlike, enduring so bravely. At last I got quite tired of my sport, and began to hate the wretch, as his glances at the passive object of his gallantries seemed to give her credit for a sympathy with his overtures of which she was wholly innocent. He at last looked so atrociously amorous, that I could keep my temper no longer, but slipping my foot again into my shoe, I waited for his next approach; and drawing back my leg an instant, to take forcible aim, I darted it forward with amazing accuracy, and just caught his advancing shin-bone on the edge of my square-toed shoe. The pain he suffered must have been intolerable, for he smacked his knee against the

table with a force that caused it to dart up like a spring-board, and made a *matelotte* of eels, which was beside him, bound, as though they had just been popped into the frying-pan. Several bottles and glasses were upset and broken, and the whole of the sensitive assemblage looked affrighted. The victim of my vengeance writhed with pain, and I, with all the hypocrisy I could put on, looked penitence personified, and apologized, expressing my fears that I had kicked *him*, instead of a dog or cat, which I supposed to have been at my foot. "I beg a thousand pardons," said I, in conclusion.

"*Au contraire, Monsieur, c'est moi,*" exclaimed he, bowing down to the table-cloth, with perfect politeness, and I was quite satisfied. But if I was, or even *gratified* with his discomfiture and suffering, the feeling was soon changed to one of a very different kind. No sooner were the staring eyes of the party taken off his face, which I, however, continued slyly

to observe, than I perceived him to dart one look at my lovely neighbour, of such a mixed and horrible kind, that I felt myself bodily to shrink from it. He either meant to reproach her for her insensibility to his suffering, of which she knew nothing, or for a complicity in the injury done him—Heaven knows what! But so deadly a look of anger, hatred, and revenge, I certainly never witnessed. During the remainder of the repast he sat sullen and silent. The dinner was in due time finished; the party rose from table; and while coffee was preparing to be served in another room, every body went out to walk in the garden.

CHAPTER III.

The principal doctor, with persecuting politeness, was most assiduous in his attentions to me during the after-dinner promenade. He seemed to have ransacked the whole stores of his memory, since morning, for a collection of terms the most abstruse, and words the most jaw-breaking, in the whole range of science and lexicography. He opened out a battery upon me of subjects of every *calibre*, from the Predicaments of Aristotle to Newton's Principia; and he was deep in the substance of a Treatise (which he meant to publish, or had published,

I forget which) in refutation of Sir Isaac's doctrine of the tides, when sudden screams from the garden-house, near to which we were walking, caused him to dart off like a shooting star, and I soon saw his dandy assistant running in the same direction. The various groups which had been lounging about, under the superintendance of this young doctor, quickly dispersed, and with affrighted looks they all ran to the shelter of the larger building, as if the sounds from *the other* reminded them of what had before been, and might again be, their own fate.

My attention was wholly given to the screams which were piercingly sent forth. They were from a female voice, of the most harrowing tone. My imagination instantly pictured the form of my lovely neighbour at the dinner table, writhing under the correction of the bilious villain, whose infernal look seemed still to dance before my eyes, and to turn every thing yellow. This was the natural effect of association rather than

reasoning; but the impulse it gave me led me in the direction of the place which all the others, save the doctors, fled from. As I got nearer to the dismal dwelling the sounds died away, or rather came in a gurgling murmur, like the obstructed voice of a forest stream.

"Do you hear that?" asked somebody, from behind a mass of shrubs. "They are now forcing the gag into her mouth—choking her, perhaps. But the prime minister—"

At once startled and shocked by the sound and the *sense* of the fat lady's announcement, I sprang away towards the scene of cruelty, and had reached the house, and was rushing to the door, when Michel, who stood before it, stepped forward, and putting his hand against my breast, said, in a tone of insolent firmness,

"You must not enter here, Sir."

"Let me pass, ruffian!" exclaimed I; and I was endeavouring to force my way, when the appearance of the very man I seemed to seek made me stop suddenly, and caused me to

shrink back with a shudder of detestation. It was the sallow doctor who came from the house, attracted by the angry voices of myself and the sturdy scoundrel, who gave me back quite as much abuse as I lavished on him, and struggled with all his might against my efforts for entrance. Alarm was the most evident symptom on the doctor's pale face, but it bore plain tokens of still greater agitation than could be caused by my words, high sounding as they were. His cheeks were the colour of a faded lemon, with livid and mouldy spots here and there; and in two or three places the marks of nails had furrowed them, and left traces in which there should have been blood, had not the wretch's coward heart sucked his veins dry. His cravat was torn; and a good deal of dishevelment in his dress altogether, told me quite enough, to convince me that my imagination had not exceeded the bounds of fact.

"What, in God's name, is the matter? Who alks of the police?" asked he, tremblingly.

"I do!" said I recovering myself; "and if I am refused entrance here, I will call in the aid of some power able to save the victims inside."

"Oh, is that it?" replied the sneaking wretch, with a smile that reversed every notion of what a smile ought to convey. "Is that the cause of all this tumult? If you take my advice, Sir, you will retire, and not disturb the tranquillity of this place, nor interrupt the duties of *patented* physicians in the care of their patients."

"Tranquillity! patented! care!" echoed I, and I was about to utter something more original, and not less striking, when the chief doctor himself, the Corypheus of the junta of *patented* tyranny, made his appearance. He seemed taken rather by surprise; but he shewed more tact than the ruffled subaltern he was leagued with.

"My good Sir," said he, addressing me with overacted civility, "what is the matter? Are you unwell? Has any thing unpleasant occurred that I may rectify?"

"That you know best, Sir," answered I. "I shall rather ask you these questions. I wish to know what has happened, and the cause of the dreadful sounds which have alarmed your whole establishment?"

"*Alarmed* them! not a bit, my dear Sir. You deceive yourself. They are all too well accustomed to these things. Come, come, let us walk this way, and I will tell you all about it."

With these words he took me familiarly by the arm, and was about walking me off; but I shook myself from his hold, and protested against stirring from the spot until he explained what had happened. Thus pressed, and not wishing to let an example of insubordination get wind, he turned to me again with great address, and continued —

"To be sure, my very good Sir; to be sure; I am too happy to explain any thing to you which may cause you any surprise. I value too much the good luck which has given me the happiness of your society, to let our good un-

derstanding be impaired by refusing, as I peremptorily might, this explanation, which you have no earthly right to demand."

"Pardon me, Sir," said I, warmly, "as a man, in common humanity, I am entitled to ask it."

"Well, well, granted, if you will have it so," rejoined he; "but as a physician, at my discretion, I may, if I choose, refuse it."

"Yes, but—"

"Let's not argue about it," continued he, with forced suavity—"I have the best of the *argument* on my side, depend on it—but you shall know this mighty secret. One of our refractory patients (and we have enough, God help us!) required some correction, and has received it from my worthy friend here, that's all!"

"It was the lady who sat beside me at dinner?" asked I, abruptly.

"How do you know that?"

"You are right, it was," said the doctors

simultaneously, the guilt-stricken assistant being rather earlier with his question, than the chief with his answer.

"Good God!" exclaimed I, "is it really possible that *violence* could have been required with that suffering creature, who seemed bowed down with melancholy?"

"My dear Sir, there is at times a crisis in the peculiar complaint from which that young person suffers, that causes the most frightful transitions. Such has just taken place. This gentleman has the especial charge of the poor creature. Look at his face—see the evidence it bears of the girl's frenzy."

"Poor thing!" uttered I, involuntarily: but the sallow visaged wretch took the exclamation to *himself*, and in the warmth of his gratitude for my supposed sympathy, he was beginning to explain more than he was called upon to do.

"Lord, Sir, this is nothing to what I have suffered from that spiteful vixen at times."

"Was there no cause for this outrage?" asked I.

"Not the least, Sir. When I attempted to feel her pulse quite gently, as she was lying down on her bed after dinner—"

"Pray," said I — maliciously, I confess— "pray, does the pulse of melancholy madness lie in the instep?"

But I rather repented my jocoseness, bitter as it was; for the two doctors sent me forth two looks, of very different kinds, but equally evil-boding, as far as I could read their meaning. The elder practitioner, always on the watch for symptoms of *irrationality* in every one he talked to, evidently thought my question of a very dubious nature as an indication of my actual right-mindedness. The yellow fellow at once divined my allusion to his conduct—he blushed a tawny blush, knit his dark brows into a frown that it appeared impossible to unravel again, gave me a look the very counter-

part of that which had so shocked me at dinner-table, and then abruptly turned away without more words.

The chief doctor, with a medicinal solicitude and an eager attention, begged me to explain what I meant by my extraordinary question. Wishing not to get further entangled in his inquiries, or in the enmity of the assistant, I answered him very briefly, and in a way to put his surmises to rest, by making him sure of my meaning.

" Your friend understands me perfectly, doctor," replied I—" my question was meant for him; and should you be curious as to its meaning, he can explain it if he chooses: but let it pass for the present—it is of very minor importance to the subject which led to all this conversation. *That*, I confess, interests me deeply; and without wishing to meddle in the delicacies of your professional practice, I hope I may be allowed to solicit your own immediate interference in the management of the unfortu-

nate young person with whom your assistant is in too close contact. I have good reason for what I say, and he knows it."

The doctor paused for a few minutes, and then said—

"I have been thinking of what you just uttered. I will not affect to misunderstand you; but I can form no opinion on your hints: nor can I personally interfere, as you would wish me, in the actual details of this lady's treatment. As chief of this establishment I have a right to a general superintendance over all the patients it contains; but you cannot, my dear Sir, have to learn that, in our profession, there is the most scrupulous delicacy to be paid to the etiquette of practice."

"I know that many a precious life has been forfeited to it," replied I.

"Partial evil must be endured to secure the general good," answered he, in a pompous tone. I had no wish for a discussion on his common-place ethics; so I did not let any

observation of mine fill up the pause which he left open for me; and he, seeing there was no chance of an argument, and no excuse for a dissertation, let the subject drop. Reverting to the more particular theme of our discourse, he continued—

"You thus see it is impossible for me to scrutinize too minutely the particulars of this case."

"What," said I, "if I can establish good grounds for your suspicion that this assistant of yours is pursuing a very different *treatment* of this helpless young lady from what duty, or delicacy, or decency commands?"

"Hush, hush, my good Sir; not so loud, if you please: the convalescents walk about the gardens quite at their liberty."

"There is not much fear, doctor, of their venturing into *this* neighbourhood."

"Well, well, Sir," cried he impatiently, and somewhat ill-temperedly, "we really must not moot those points at present: I must re-

quest, and, indeed, insist that the discipline which I see it good to establish here, which the laws of my country allow, and which the authorities recognize, may not be disturbed, nor my courtesy abused—"

"Softly, softly, my good doctor," said I, interrupting him, and, falconer-like, seeking to bring back my bird to his allure; "you are giving yourself useless trouble, and throwing away your words. If you would stifle all inquiry or repress every suggestion on my part, I have no objection to quit your house altogether, and try if the authorities you speak of will be as indifferent as you are to my suspicions of the infamous conduct—"

"For Heaven's sake, Sir, speak lower—you are really very imprudent. Pray walk with me, calmly and coolly, into my study, and we can talk over this affair: not another word in the open air, I beg of you!"

The ill-concealed perturbation of my companion convinced me I had taken the right

tone with him; and believing that, through the medium of his fears, I might find means to work out some good to the unfortunate victims of the system going on around me, I determined to make a temporary compromise, and I accordingly accompanied him to the house. As we crossed the garden, I observed the fat lady, evidently on the watch for me, and making various signs of invitation to another conference. I took no notice of this, for fear of attracting the doctor's keen-sightedness, and turning his anger into the current of impunity on which the fat lady seemed floating; but, to give his attention another object, I pointed to an old woman whom one of the servants was exercising in a garden-chair, the rudder-wheel of which the decrepit invalid was not even able to direct. Had not more stirring subjects occupied my mind, I would have stopped to examine and compassionate the poor old creature. She seemed in the very last stage of existence, and presented a most humiliating example of mortal

imbecility. I made a remark to that effect to the doctor, as we passed by her.

"Yes, Sir," said he, with an indifferent air, "she is all but buried—the flame is in the socket—it would be mercy to put an extinguisher on it."

I had no time then to reason on this expression of the doctor's *humanity*, but it came to my mind with great force afterwards.

We sat together in the doctor's study for full an hour. As he had a voluble tongue, a clear head, and good memory, it may be imagined what a fund of information he had it in his power to give me during our conference; and I must allow that he did not misapply his time, nor "husband his resources." He entered, with an apparent frankness, into the subjects of my inquiry, which convinced me that he was either conscious of his rectitude, anxious to keep a shew of openness, or very fond of the music of his own voice—the three readiest causes for garrulity in those who are not far

advanced in years or deeply immersed in love: yet I confess myself to have been, at the time, puzzled as to the chief reason for the doctor's fluent communications, for he possessed such a fund of *finesse* and tact as quite to baffle me; and, after all, while apparently talking to me in the utmost confidence, he told me nothing that I might not have learned from the fat lady, except, perhaps, one or two unimportant particulars relative to her, which I should not have gathered from herself.

The subject matter of our conversation related entirely to the various individuals whom I have cursorily introduced to the reader. Wishing to lead the doctor gradually on to the person in whose fate I felt the strongest interest, from having, as it were, unintentionally become involved in it, I began my inquiries with those whose situation excited a comparatively trifling regard: but before we touched upon any of those persons even, the doctor candidly avowed to me the absolute nature of his house, which

the reader knows already; and he launched forth into a ready-cut-and-dry detail of its pre-eminent advantages over all others of the kind, and of his own peculiar superexcellence, beyond all other practitioners, in diseases of the mind, which might have been, and, I dare say, has been, printed over and over again, as the prospectus of every receptacle of the like nature existing.

Having thus established a sort of right to my personal inquiries, I began by some relating to the fat lady; and of her I learned that she was a simple, unoffending soul, whose madness was her inheritance, her father having died in the frightful way she had told me; but he had previously cut off the chief entail, as I may call it, of his complaint, leaving his daughter only *foolish* instead of *frantic*. She had gone on harmlessly through life, from childhood to her then age of forty, or thereabouts, supported by a pension from the government, which had been regularly paid through all the consular, impe-

rial, and monarchical changes; and as she had the privilege of an unlimited run of the house and grounds, and fancied herself in direct correspondence with the prime minister for the time being, she was, the doctor assured me, much happier than many of sounder minds, and more rational than many with less vacant countenances.

We next talked of the old priest, of whom the doctor had so savagely spoken to the porter, and the fat lady so feelingly to me. Of him the doctor professed to have but little to say, but that his head was turned, in consequence of his receiving an autograph communication on some theological work from his Holiness the Pope, which ended in his fancying that he was "himself the Great Sublime"—and on his bishop placing him under the doctor's tender care, he was preposterous enough to imagine the garden-house St. Peter's Cathedral; and was, when he had not to complain of the quality of his dinner, (particularly on *maigre* days) more enviably

placed, the doctor thought, than if he wore the tiara, and had the half of Europe delighted to kiss the tip of his toe.

Of young Vincent de Bouverie the doctor spoke with overacted sensibility; lamenting that so fine a youth should have been deprived of all "discourse of reason," and with it the possession of the half of his father's vast fortune, now destined entirely for his younger brother, who did not oppose his own inclinations to his parents' authority. But the most lamentable thing, according to the doctor's notion, was that amorous propensity which led this unfortunate Vincent to make love to every woman that came in his way, which had first developed itself in a desperate attachment to one of his mother's maids; and was, in spite of every means to keep his blood cool, again bursting forth in relation to the countess.

Of the countess the doctor either could not, or would not, tell me any thing, beyond her being a widow, and placed under the restrictions

of his discipline, to prevent her marrying a second time, and thus getting cured of her immoderate grief for her husband, and depriving his surviving brothers of the large possessions which would be theirs, or their children's, at her death. "And fortunate it will be for her, poor dear lady," said the doctor, "should we succeed in keeping up that salutary state of despondency, which will save her from the rocks of matrimony, on which she has been once already split!"

"But the sweet girl," said I, "who sat beside me at table, and towards whom your assistant is, trust me, pursuing a most foul course of conduct? What of her? Who is she, doctor? and what is the cause of that deep melancholy which so totally possesses her? I have never seen a lovelier or more truly interesting being—tell me, then, who she is, and why she is here. No cause of a common nature could have an influence, I think, on the mind that should be joined with a face of such intelligence. Pray

tell me all of her that you may, in candour and fairness, communicate to a stranger. You may take the interest she has excited in me, as the guarantee for my discretion."

"Well, then, listen patiently," replied the doctor, "and you shall learn all that I know about her."

CHAPTER IV.

From the doctor's disclosures, and from what I acquired afterwards on still better authority, I am enabled to state the causes which led to the deplorable situation in which I found the unfortunate young lady; and I prefer condensing the details, in my own way, to giving them as they were recounted to me, in the prolixity and diffuseness of oral communications.

She, to whose name I cannot give publicity, was the child of parents of high rank, large fortune, and great consideration in the country. She was a younger daughter; and, according to the system of interested barbarism fast reviving

in France, she was destined for a convent, that her elder sister might have the better chance of making a splendid marriage, with the increased portion gained by the sacrifice, and freed from the danger of rivalry with the bewitching beauty of the victim.

The privations and restrictions of a convent did not, however, suit the temperament of her who possessed too much of the feelings, or, perhaps, the *failings*, of mortality, to be satisfied with a seclusion from all the enjoyments of this world, for the questionable advantages promised to be secured by it in the next. She went through a couple of years of noviciate trial, with exemplary patience, and a strict observance of all those rules which were revolting to her notions of what was right, and her feelings of what was agreeable. She made great progress in the finishing acquirements of her education; and, on her finally declining to take the vows, she came back to her father's house, at nineteen years of age, in pursuance of the compact made

with her when she had quitted it, to essay the probation stipulated for the destined victims of the church. Her parents now discovered that the only way left for her disposal was the usual one of getting her married; and they could not avoid introducing her to the brilliant circle of society in which they mixed. Launched into the vortex of Parisian life, "the refractory novice," as she was familiarly called among her friends, excited great admiration, and not a little curiosity. She possessed a frank disposition, a high spirit, and unbounded gaiety. She received the exaggerated devotions of half the young men of fashion in Paris, but was as little affected by their "lip service" as the idol figure of a saint in its shrine.

At length, however, her *insensibility*, as it was commonly called, was destined to suffer a powerful change; and all the feelings of the heart, which had so long lain dormant, were awakened. A young Englishman, with whom she became acquainted by chance, performed the

miracle which was thought beyond the power of mortal man, *because* a dozen of her own countrymen had attempted it in vain. The flinty heart of "the refractory novice" was struck, in the right way, and a fountain of passionate feeling gushed from it at the touch.

The particulars of the courtship I did not learn; nor can I enter into the circumstances attendant on an attachment to which the family and friends of both parties were violently opposed. The novice was not a girl of the usual yielding character of French daughters. She presumed to think for herself, and she refused submission to her parents' commands, when they bid her abandon her lover, and she *could* not obey them when they ordered her to forget him. He, in his turn, spurned every attempt at opposition on the part of his family, whose principles or prejudices were strongly opposed to his marrying a French woman and a Catholic. The usual means were resorted to, on both sides, to tear up the attachment by the roots. The lover

was refused supplies—his mistress was removed far from Paris, into the neighbourhood of the place where I met her, and near to which her father's possessions lay. But lovers never fail in expedients for the means of following their mistresses, and the latter can always find opportunities for meeting. Stolen interviews took place accordingly. Discovery, separation, and increased seclusion were the consequence. The influence of the parents caused the lover to be put under the *surveillance* of the police, and a domestic guardianship, full as strict, was adopted towards the refractory girl.

Obstacles almost insurmountable were thus thrown in the way of the lovers; and the natural channel for the vent of their feelings being stopped, they turned inward upon them with consuming force, and, like a stream dammed up until its waters become stagnant, they poisoned the soil they should have fertilized. It was then that dank vapours rose upwards to the brain of the unfortunate girl, and her mind became

tainted with their noxious influence. The sudden revulsion from high spirits to despondency, from the gaieties of the world to the solitude of domestic retirement, from the sunbright visions of hope to the gloom of despair, produced the natural effects upon the whole nervous system, and a state of high excitement was followed by a total relaxation. The tone of her mind seemed utterly destroyed; yet no symptom beyond what are considered within the limits of *nervous affections* had appeared. Physicians were consulted; and, as usual, they differed in their opinions. Some, the harsh old bachelors, recommended constraint. Others, considerate fathers, advised indulgence. One, a tender-hearted young practitioner, wrote "marriage" for *his* prescription —and thus proved the sympathy between good feeling and good sense. But his advice was spurned, and himself dismissed; and a consultation with *my* doctor decided on, as the only chance of relief left for the tormented patient.

This doctor of mine, or of *ours*, if my readers

will acknowledge the acquaintance, had very considerable provincial reputation. It was of course to be supposed that, with a due sense of his professional dignity, he would differ from all his brethren. And, as the keeper of a *Maison de Santé*, nothing less could be expected from him than an urgent recommendation to have her, who so suffered from the misconceptions of the rest of the tribe, removed at once to his house, to have the full benefit of his management. The father and mother, kindly disposed towards their child, and only outrageous at her flagrant violation of propriety and obedience in presuming to have a choice of her own, gladly adopted the doctor's advice. His house had a high character for decorum, and he himself the highest possible reputation for skill and humanity. The father and mother, resolved to see with their own eyes, (that not over-common means of acquiring knowledge,) paid a visit to the doctor in his establishment; and he, as was usual in such visits of *reconnoissance*, took care to have every thing

in the most *imposing* order. Every disagreeable object was removed, including the old woman in the garden-chair, the fat lady, and all others that could, by word or look, make an unfavourable impression as to the doctor's place or practice. The premises breathed the very atmosphere of tranquillity, and the doctor took care that the anxious father and mother should not approach within sight of the garden-house. In fact, they were delighted with the appearance of things, and not less with the manners of the medical firm. The sallow doctor, who was introduced as the gentleman who would have the especial care of the young invalid, quite won the mother's heart by his gentle and insinuating speeches; and it was decided that the nervous girl should be at once removed to the "house of health."

She readily consented to this plan, for a gleam of hope revived in her heart, at the very change of situation; and when she saw the place allotted for her new residence, she was quite rejoiced.

Its whole aspect was in unison with her feelings, and the kind and conciliating manners of the doctors gave her the hope of making, by their means, her situation known to her lover. Under these flattering and deceptious expectations, she entered the *Maison de Santé*—but a short time sufficed to shew her how she had cheated herself. She quickly perceived that she was surrounded by the insane, and in the power of the wicked; that her symptoms were aggravated by violence, and her senses actually in danger from the infection of those she mixed with. And, by degrees, new and more serious causes of disquiet assailed her. The scenes of cruelty acted around her could not be long concealed. The muttered imprecations of the sufferers reached her ears; and she could not shut her eyes on the looks and gestures of the tyrants. She soon herself became enrolled among the victims. Her sallow-visaged attendant marked her as *his* prey—and, whether by silent consent, or avowed compact, the chief physician permitted his designs, by not

interfering with them; and thus negatively countenanced what he turned his face from.

By what measures the reprobate first assailed the object of his fiendish passion it is hard to say, although we may suppose them; but no ghost has yet spoken from the prison-house. That this disgrace at once to medicine and manhood did, however, avail himself of the opportunities afforded by the trust reposed in him, is too true; and the evidence of my instep is not wanting to convict him of a course of vile attempts upon the delicate creature committed to his charge. These facts transpired afterwards; but at the time I arrived on the scene of his iniquitous doings, the result of his conduct upon his victim had been such as utterly to change her from what she had once been, to plunge her into a state of hopeless melancholy, to break her spirit, and destroy her health; but he had never been able to conquer her aversion nor subdue her virtue. Under all these harsh inflictions of his temper, and the

savage out-burstings of his odious passion, she rallied the little that was left her of physical and mental strength, and repulse after repulse drove the wretch to that crisis of brute desperation, ending in the treatment which caused the alarm that led to my interference.

Having thus informed my readers as much of previous circumstances as were necessary to excite their interest for the chief subject of my own, I must say a few words relative to the young Englishman, whose fate was, not merely metaphorically, but actually and most fatally, bound up with hers. This young man, ardent, thoughtless, and impetuous, had rushed headlong into the passion which, like an irresistible torrent, bore him along. He possessed no means, such as I have heard it asserted are of easy acquirement, to stem the tide of feeling; at least he put forth no opposing efforts, but resigned himself willingly to his fate, and was satisfied that he better ensured his happiness by the indulgence of his attachment than he

could have done by all the triumph of subduing it. His pride, too, was roused by opposition: he thought that his parents, as well as hers, acted at once cruelly and contemptibly, and he was resolved that it should not be his fault if they succeeded in separating two beings for ever, whom they could not for one moment alienate. He swore not to abandon the object of his affection, but to use every means of seeing her, and of obtaining her, though he should lose his life in the attempt. We shall see whether or not this vow was "false as dicer's oaths."

After the last separation, which I before alluded to, and which had only increased the determination of the lovers to meet again, if possible, the young Englishman was long baffled in his endeavours to obtain a clue as to the place of his mistress's concealment. His temperament could ill brook the agitations of suspense, which no exertions of his own seemed capable of removing. Every application to the

family and kindred of his beloved one was treated with scorn: bribery was ineffectual with the servants, and the strict watchfulness of the police totally thwarted all his personal efforts to obtain information. He also found difficulty in raising money in a foreign country, and without that, the main-spring of human conduct—self-interest, was not within his power of purchase; and the manifold anxieties which beset him, almost drove him to despair. The gaming table was the remedy sure to be tried by a man like the one I am now treating of; and such a man, in such a mood, was as sure to become a dupe as he became a gambler. He soon lost all he could command in the shape of money or securities, and, having *no* command over himself, he was quickly rushing on to more than one kind of ruin.

At this juncture, a specious villain, one of the rejected suitors of her for whom he was thus suffering, threw himself in the way of the unhappy lover, as if by chance, but pursuant to

a deep and base design. This man, leagued with some members of her family who favoured his suit, and who, like himself, were ready to go to the greatest lengths (provided the means were safe) to get rid of the favoured rival, had resolved to lure him on, by gradual steps, to such a state of mental wretchedness as would lead him to some act that might, *at least*, procure his removal from the country altogether. With this object, the false friend in question came across him at one of his moments of frantic wretchedness, and by all the insidious manœuvring of treachery, he wormed himself into the unsuspecting lover's confidence. He represented himself, after a while, as actuated but by warm wishes for her happiness whose heart he had once aspired to, and he professed the utmost zeal in his desire to forward the means by which he believed that happiness would be secured. The lover, at once flattered by this, and almost bewildered by the apparent good fortune which had raised up this generous

friend in his distress, soon threw himself wholly into the snare so skilfully prepared for him, and gave himself up implicitly to the guidance that seemed leading him to certain happiness. His false friend, having now got him completely into his power, took care to manage him for his purposes. He kept up his state of irritating uncertainty—at one time setting him nearly desperate from disappointment, at another rendering him nearly wild with joy; now holding up his mistress to his view, as it were, and easily within his reach; and again representing her as lost to him for ever. Violent paroxysms of opposite feelings seemed to make the unfortunate victim their sport; and in a little while his state of mind was such as to give a fair colour to almost any representation which might be made of its irregularity.

Having so far succeeded in his designs, it was with apparent justice and propriety that this man called the attention of the police to the situation of the unfortunate young Englishman.

He professed himself to be his friend, and in that character he required the countenance of the authorities to those measures of safety which he felt it necessary to take in behalf of the unhappy foreigner. His request appeared so reasonable that it was easily granted, and the strict *surveillance* which might have saved its object from greater evil being removed, the false friend had a wide discretion allowed him in the management of his victim. He had acquired immense influence over him, and readily obtained his assent to every movement he proposed, but to none more joyfully than that which was urged in consequence of the pretended discovery of the long-sought retreat of her for whom alone he lived. The identical *Maison de Santé* (where she was indeed too securely lodged), was pointed out to the delighted lover as the bourne of all his anxieties. *There* he was assured she was, and to gain admission there was the immediate object of his impetuous determination.

How to effect this object appeared somewhat difficult to the lover, for it was to be expected that the family of his mistress would take every precaution to exclude the possibility of his approach: but his ready friend obviated all difficulty by proposing that he should feign illness of that nature that made the *Maison de Santé* a peculiarly desirable retreat; and a footing once obtained, the rest was to depend on himself. He eagerly adopted this plan, and it so happened that the very day of my arrival at the place was that of his application, attended by his confidant, to be received into the establishment as a patient labouring under occasional nervous derangement, and requiring just such mild and temperate treatment—as (even had his complaint been real) he would have been sure not to meet there.

I little imagined, as the doctor was interrupted in the middle of our evening conference, by Michel's announcement of the arrival of two gentlemen requiring accommodations—that one

of these was the person relative to whom he had been giving me the partial details to which I was afterwards enabled to add, and whose very existence was involved in the fate of her whose pitiable situation filled at the time my whole thoughts. Whether or not the doctor knew the persons that waited for him, or if he were a party to the iniquitous proceedings in such desperate and frightful progress, I know not. He, however, rather abruptly left me to attend the summons; and I once more strolled out into the garden, to turn over in my mind the information I had acquired, and to cogitate on the best course for my conduct, in the somewhat delicate situation in which I was placed.

The first person I saw was the fat lady, who seemed to await my approach with a countenance big with mystery. Her face was at the full, and shone on me most pregnantly. But I no longer enjoyed her flights. My mind was occupied with more serious thoughts than she could inspire; and I would have altogether

avoided her, had I not thought it well to keep on good terms with so communicative an ally, whose services might be useful in furtherance of the plans I began to form.

The sun was just setting, and seemed sinking into the liquid bed of a broad lake, that bounded the view from an elevated terrace at the end of the garden. I looked through its lofty balustrade, upon the luxuriant richness of the plain below me; and the calm breath of evening awoke a thousand odours from the orange trees and myrtles, and the profusion of southern shrubs which adorned the gardens. At one end of the terrace, a man of most cadaverous aspect, with long matted beard, and meanly dressed, paced backwards and forwards with hurried movement; his eyes cast down, his lips closely compressed together, and his air abstracted and morose. At the other extremity of this promenade, a well dressed woman, in white muslin robes, and all the other appliances of her costume corresponding, was on her knees, in the attitude of

prayer. She looked on the setting sun, undazzled by the splendours of his golden disk, as if her eyes received strength from the spirit of adoration which prompted her gaze. Her gestures were more impassioned than devout, and gave her an air of still greater enthusiasm than one attaches to even the warmth of religious feeling. Had it not been for that, she would have embodied all that might be imagined of a Peruvian priestess at her fervid rites, or some matron fire-worshipper in the exercise of oriental devotion.

"Who are these new characters?" asked I of my fat follower, who had walked quickly after me, and was now by my side.

"That poor man yonder," replied she, "was one of the wealthiest stockbrokers of Paris; but at length totally ruined by some speculation or other, he lost his wits, poor creature!—and he now fancies himself the wandering Jew, condemned to a penance of total silence for a thousand years. He never speaks—"

"And she?" interrupted I.

"Oh! the wife of the Sun? Don't you know her? Lord, Sir, she has been married to him these two years, and now that he is gone to bed, you see she is walking off to hers. Winter and summer she is faithful to his motions—away she goes, you see."

The harmless and happy bride did actually retreat at those words, wrapping herself closely round in her white scarf; and the fat lady, looking after her with a protecting air, exclaimed—

"Poor misguided thing! What a sin to keep you in this wretched place! But never mind," continued she, turning briskly towards me again, —"never mind! I will have her removed from this—I will write to the—"

"Prime-minister," said I; "is it not so?"

"Pray, how did you come to know that I knew him!" exclaimed she, in much surprise.

"A little bird told me so," answered I, with a tone of deep gravity, which I was certain would put her to flight.

"Indeed, Sir? Good evening to you; good evening, Sir; I wish you a very good evening; good evening—Sir;—good—even—" murmured she, as she rapidly curtesied herself off the terrace, and disappeared into one of the alleys.

By this time, thought I, the doctor may be at leisure again. I cannot now attend to these fresh specimens of insanity—I must be at my post!

CHAPTER V.

As I approached the house again, I observed the chief doctor, standing in conversation with two gentlemen near the door of entrance. One of these, a robust, well-dressed Frenchman, verging towards middle-agedness, seemed to pay very earnest attention to the doctor's didactic holding-forth, while he, nevertheless, kept a keen glance of observation upon the movements of his companion, whose eyes appeared to examine with eager scrutiny every window of the house, and every flower of the garden. This latter individual I saw at once to be an Englishman; and he had that pecu-

liar air of easy elegance—that medium between the spurious swaggering of vulgarity and the starched disdain of dandyism—which so completely marks the gentleman of true breeding in all countries. His dress was negligent, but highly fashionable; he looked under five-and-twenty years of age; and was particularly handsome. His face possessed an air of much intelligence, which seemed excited to intensity as he threw his eyes from object to object; and seemed to penetrate into each with inquiring gaze. His animated countenance and manly form were redolent of health and vigour; and a look of confidence and courage seemed to mark him as fit for enterprise and suited for success. I saw that there was some strong excitement working in this fine young fellow; but not wishing to intrude myself into the secrets of himself and his friend, and having a subject of more interest to occupy my attention, I turned away, and walked in the direction of the garden-house.

I hoped, and yet dreaded, to hear some sounds that might intimate the situation of the unfortunate young lady. I approached the walls of the place of woe; but all was still and silent, save the feeble voice of an old person, chanting in faint discord one of the Latin psalms used in the service of the Church of Rome. I listened with attention to the frequent repetition of one line, which seemed uttered with pious delight. It was

"Hic habitabo, quoniam elegi eam."

I could not help feeling how enviable was the aged priest, in the satisfied enjoyment of his dignities, and throned in the chosen splendours of his imaginary temple, compared with the hapless being, whose youth and beauty were the fatal causes of her miseries, and in whom reason still held its seat with cruel tenacity. "It were better be mad outright," thought I, "than doomed to the consciousness which she must endure." And scarcely did the thought flit

through my brain, when my eye caught the countenance of the sallow fiend, glancing in odious contrast through the leaves of an olive tree, as he paced a neighbouring alley in the direction of the large house. I followed him with fascinated gaze, and saw him enter a little porch in one of the low wings which flanked the house. He slided in stealthily, with a side glance thrown at the two strangers, who were walking arm in arm.

The elder man seemed, with persuasive energy, to repress the other's impetuosity, which was evinced in his fiery glances and rapid gesticulation. The chief doctor spoke apart to his dandy assistant and a couple of the livery servants, and gave directions at intervals to Michel the porter, who looked alternately to the strangers and the garden-house, and finally walked off towards that place with dogged alacrity.

Isaw there was some preparation for new suffering going forward; and I was not slow to conjecture that its object was my fine looking

young countryman, in the intrepid energy of whose mien, and in, what appeared to me, his uncalled-for agitation, I took it for granted his friends had discovered the incipient germs, that only required the forcing horrors of the *garden-house* to burst into the rank luxuriance of insanity. But before I had time to mature my observations upon him into certainty, a shocking succession of events came hurrying on, that swept thought, and reflection, and calculation, before them, and left the mind in a state of bewilderment and chaos.

The young Englishman had suddenly turned out of one of the side walks, leading from the garden-house, close to that wing of the main building, where the yellow doctor, or devil, had entered. He held high language with his friend, and evidently expostulated in fluent French, although I could distinguish only the acute English accent of what he uttered, but not the import of his words. But a keener ear, and one more accustomed to the tones of his

sonorous voice was close by, to catch enough of the beloved sound, whose faintest whisperings could vibrate through her heart. Just as the Englishman passed under one of the closed windows, the Venetian blinds of which could only exclude his person, but not the speaking evidence of his identity, from the dear object within, a scream, far different from what had, earlier in the evening, thrilled through me, burst from the closed window. I never heard so awful a sound of *joy*. It came deadened through the glass and the slight woodwork of the blinds, with a hushed, yet piercing tone. It made me thrill with mixed sensations of surprise and anxiety, for I at once recognized the voice for that which had before spoken its agony from the bars of the garden-house, and I only knew from it that the poor sufferer had been removed from that horrid place.

But if it so affected *me*—and if it made the two doctors and their satellite attendants dart forward with a guilty shudder, what will not

the reader imagine of its effect on the amazed and impassioned lover, who no sooner caught and acknowledged its appeal to the deepest passion of his soul, than he sprang back in an attitude of wonderment—stood with wide mouth and straining eyes to catch the confirmation of the sound—and for an instant looked as though immoveably rooted to the spot from which he was, nevertheless, preparing to bound.

And again the voice did come; but no longer in a stifled scream, as at first.

"Edward, Edward! I hear you, though I see you not! I know you are there—Oh, come, come quickly up—fly to my help!—the wretch is dragging me from the window!" A suppressed and smothered utterance of sounds was next heard: but the lover required no more. With an agile bound he rushed into the low portal, and all the observers of the scene were in a moment on the spot. The doctors, Michel, and two other servants, darted past me, and the Englishman's companion followed them into the

house. I hurried with the others up the stairs, and though but partially enabled to understand the relative situation of the two principal actors in this touching scene, I had no hesitation as to the side in which my sympathies were to enlist.

When I reached the landing-place, which terminated the ten or a dozen steps of the narrow stairs, I saw a low door, at the right hand, lying open, and the clamour from the little room it led to directed my steps. The scene within was of most painful confusion. The chief doctor, with the dandy, the servants, and the "friend" of the Englishman, were forcing the latter from the embrace of his long-sought mistress. The sallow doctor, and a coarse-looking woman, were dragging the beauteous girl from her lover's closely strained arms. Although they both struggled against their assailants, with force that would have been supernatural had not love braced the sinews of both, they seemed to have no look, no word

but for each other. The most impassioned murmurings of rapture came through a din of threats and imprecations, like the hum of flower-enamoured bees in the tumult of a thunder-storm!

The fair sufferer—and well may I call her fair—was in a state of more than half undress. Her muslin night-robe hung loosely on her, and the flounced cap, which had been fastened below her chin, was open and untied, and thus converted to what the French, in their light mockery of even madness, call a *bonnet à la folle.*

It is needless to say what part I took in the rapidly acted scene. Much less time than my pen could require to trace it sufficed to finish *that* part of the drama, and I soon found myself along with my struggling countryman, once more in the garden. The last thing I saw, as I made my forced exit from the room, was the yellow doctor and his female assistant forcing a sack-like covering, with long, loose sleeves, upon

their forlorn victim, who struggled to the last, and waved her bare arms around her in determined resistance to their efforts. As we confusedly descended the stairs, low moans came from the door opposite the room we had just quitted. "There lies another victim!" exclaimed I; but the expression was unheard or unheeded.

The vigorous opposition to removal made by the Englishman, caused us some minutes' delay; but we were, as I have stated, soon in the garden. Arrived there, and the clatter of feet upon the stairs no longer interrupting the sounds within, we again heard the hoarse and suffocating screams of the lovely girl above, as the tyrants were violently attempting to choke her utterance. The agony expressed on the lover's countenance was dreadful, while these dire sounds pierced through him: but the sight that soon burst upon him and us rendered him absolutely frantic, and filled me with sen-

sations of mental nausea more painful than I can describe.

As soon as we were again beneath the window of the fatal chamber, and that the young man's voice rose up unobstructed to mingle with her own, the hapless girl, roused to a state of despair and frenzy, made some more powerful efforts to escape from the fiends who held her, and rushed towards the casement from their insufficient hold. This I conjectured, from the frightful evidence that instantly presented itself. A sudden crashing of the glass of the window, and the crackling of the light woodwork of the blind, told of her desperate attempt at escape; and, in a moment, one of her snow-white and beautifully-formed arms was thrust through the aperture, lacerated and bleeding from her shoulder to her fingers' points. The blood streamed from it as though some main artery had been severed, and the crimson stains trickled down the green blinds, and dripped upon the gravelled walk. Nothing could be

more appalling than the appearance of that arm, waving to and fro in its sanguined torture, while the choked shrieks that accompanied the movement bore no tone of physical suffering.

An exclamation of horror burst from *all* the beholders of this sad sight. It was too much for even the hardened nerves and hearts of the fierce menials: but never shall I forget the anguished groans uttered by the young Englishman; his struggles were Herculean, to elude the sinewy gripe of his four or five assailants. He had but two helping hands to aid his own exertions, and they were insufficient for a time to cope with the odds against them. We were all hurried together, those who dragged and those who resisted, in the direction of the garden-house, the lovely arm still waving through the window-blind, until the white streaks which the stream left at first uncovered, became gradually dyed with red, and a bloody badge of suffering was alone to be distinguished.

"Drag them on!" vociferated the doctor, and at length the garden-house was visible. The sight of its barred windows and gloomy walls gave redoubled energy to the struggles for escape, and it was evident that the worn-out attendants were obliged to relax their hold.

"Now, then," cried I to my countryman, "one bold struggle, and you are free!"

The prostrate bodies of two of the servants gave palpable echoes to the words; and in half a minute the Englishman had vaulted with an agile bound across the balustrade of the terrace, and was seen freely flying through the olive grove, that hung on the sloping ground beneath.

"Pursue him! Pursue him!" cried the doctor; "Michel, dart through the south vineyard! Antoine and Francois, cut across the burying-ground! Quick!—the little door is unbarred. Bring him back, alive or dead!"

These rapid orders were as rapidly obeyed. The three men sprang off in different directions,

while the dandy doctor climbed cautiously over the balustrade, and descended the parapet, and having readjusted his neckcloth, and put on a pair of lilac gloves, he set off briskly through the olive grove, on the track of the fugitive.

I then found myself standing between the chief doctor and the Englishman's "friend," as even I considered and called him at the time. They still held me firmly, but with a persuasive rather than a violent grasp. The fact was, I believe, that the various records of national facility left on the countenances of the truculent ruffians who had suffered most in the scuffle, gave my present companions a rather respectful feeling towards an English fist. They therefore held me at full arm's length, and while we all puffed and panted a good deal, the "friend" addressed me—

"I supplicate you, Sir," said he, "to use no more efforts to further his escape. Let him be caught, I beg of you! You know not the real

state of this affair—the peace of two noble families depends on his being secured."

"Curse their nobility! The happiness of two truly noble beings depends on his being free. Let me go!" cried I, with downright indignation, and shaking off both the arms that held me. My two antagonists, as I may call them, retreated out of the reach of my *gladiating* attitude.

"My dear Sir!" whimpered the doctor, imploringly, "if that madman escapes to the town, my establishment is ruined!"

"Your establishment be damned!" exclaimed I, as nearly as I could put the phrase into French—"He is *not* mad."

And I clearly saw he was not, or if he were, his "method" had enough of reason in it to redeem his madness.

I paused for an instant to recover breath, and decide in what direction I could best aid his escape to the suburb, which was close by, but to be reached only by surmounting several obstructions. I saw my countryman act precisely as I

did. He stopped on a little mound at the extremity of the olive grove, to take breath, and look around him. He tied his silk pocket handkerchief round his waist, and having thus laid in a fresh supply of wind, he quietly waited the approach of the dandy doctor, who came trippingly along, and so occupied with taking care of his white trowsers, that he was close upon him without knowing it. He started, on raising his head suddenly, and seeing that he was alone with the Englishman; but the latter gave him no time for further astonishment, as he knocked him down flat into the ditch beside him, and then turned to the two liveried rogues who came furiously up to him. Two well-sent and scientific salutes, right and left, tumbled those fellows over, and left them sprawling. The dandy doctor quickly recovered his legs, and ran back the way he came as fast as they could carry him; and the two cowardly caitiffs followed his example, leaving the Englishman master of the field.

At this moment, however, I observed Michel stealing through the vineyard behind, with some weapon, of bill-hook formation, in his hand; and, trembling for the safety of my countryman, I lost no further time in crossing the balustrade and making towards him by the nearest path. Neither the doctor nor "the friend" attempted to oppose me, except by most ludicrous entreaties, to which I deigned no reply. I seized a pole that lay on the ground, and thus armed, I hastened on, and the Englishman, seeing my approach, took new courage, and observing Michel's treacherous design, he armed himself as I had done, and stood on the defensive.

But at this moment a new personage appeared on the scene. This was the housekeeper, whom I had not observed since dinner time, but who now came hurrying on towards us through a meadow that separated a little burying ground from the close shelter under the garden-wall to the westward, and from which a low door, half concealed with a cypress tree, opened direct into

thepremises of the *Maison de Santé.* A truly benevolent expression beamed on the housekeeper's olive face. There was no mistaking it —nothing sinister could have put it on. It made an instant impression on the young Englishman, and he looked the conviction of having gained another friend.

"Oh, Sir," said the woman, "come back instantly. You know not what you are doing in abandoning the place where she is."

"I will," replied the young man; "no danger can equal that of being separated from her, of leaving her with those monsters even for a moment. I will go back with you. I trust to your honest countenance, and ask but one pledge. Assure me that I shall not be placed in that frightful prison in the garden—that I may be left at liberty, or lodged near her, in the large building—promise me that—swear it to me!"

"I do promise you," said she, bursting into tears, and in deep emotion—"I have lived seven

years in this place—I have known shocking things—seen shocking sights—but nothing so affecting as this. That poor arm bleeding from the window is dreadful to think of!"

"Oh God! oh God!" exclaimed the Englishman, "and I linger here—but, stop one instant. How do I know you are not deceiving me? How do I know you have the power to keep your promise? Tell me what authority you have—and then swear to exert it as you pledge yourself—here in this solemn place—on this grave—at the foot of this cross."

The woman seemed worked up to great agitation. She knelt down as desired. Her eyes streamed with tears; and she said, with deep energy,

"I do sacredly swear, that you shall not be placed in the garden-house. I pledge my existence to it—and if there is faith or honour in man, the doctor cannot fail to ratify my oath. Have no fear—but follow me to the house."

She rose, and taking the young man's arm in

hers, she moved towards the little door. But he hesitated still, and seemed even to shrink back. The fine courageous expression of his features was changed to one of doubt, if not of dread. His brow and cheeks, so lately flushed, grew suddenly ashy pale, and he seemed for a moment overwhelmed with some frightful apprehension.

Are there then, indeed, presentiments of evil allowed to operate on the human mind? Not the light phantasies of superstition, but the real warnings of Providence? Has man an instinct, teaching him to avoid the ills that threaten him? Should he, like the birds that fly the infections of the plague, follow the impulses that tell him *who* and *what* to shun? And is it false pride, not true philosophy, that makes us stifle or deny the awful whisperings of Fate? However each individual may answer these questions to himself, the results of the events I am detailing have forced the inquiry on me, many a time since *then*.

There was something awful beyond expression in the terrified agitation of the young man, as he looked on the door towards which the woman urged him. The southern twilight had now closed rapidly in, and it was almost night: a light sea breeze ruffled the tall trees of the garden, and sounded through two rows of alders, like a murmuring and melancholy water-fall. The cypresses of the grave-yard waved sullenly over our heads; and the pale and agitated faces before me filled up a picture of more than common gloom.

"For God's sake do not hesitate—come, come on! Oh! could I but tell you all!—Pray, Sir, urge him. You will come with us, won't you?"

"Certainly," said I, in reply to these latter words addressed to me; and I backed the house-keeper's entreaties with my advice that no time was to be lost.

"Well, then, since it must be so, I *will* go back. Heaven grant I am doing well for *her*

safety; and Heaven knows I care not for my own!"

As he spoke these words, he raised his fine dark eyes with an expression of peculiar solemnity, and a flush suffused his pallid cheeks. We all passed over the graves, and entered the door into the deep shade of the garden, Michel slowly following with the rude weapon in his hand, like an executioner in the menacing attitude of ancient sacrifice.

The chief doctor, who had been a spectator of the whole grave-yard scene, received us near the door, and he warmly expressed his thanks to the housekeeper and myself for our successful efforts to bring back the wanderer. To him he spoke in accents of sneaking suavity, assuring him of his tender interest, not only in his happiness, but in hers, who he *now* knew to be so dear to him. By this he implied his former ignorance of their attachment; but all that he said seemed to make little impression on him to whom it was addressed. He appeared to have

but one purpose in his mind; and he hurried along in the direction of the house.

The doctor was alone, and, in answer to my inquiries, he told me "the friend" had left the place, for the purpose of consulting the municipal authorities, on the best means of recovering possession of my countryman.

"But we have got him back, thank Heaven!" continued the doctor, "and now, for the best means of securing him." These latter words were whispered, more to himself than me. But I thought this was the time to interpose my positive demand, that no restraint should be attempted.

"Doctor," said I, "this gentleman has returned here on a solemn condition that his liberty is not to be assailed. I guarantee that his conduct shall not require any violence on your part, provided we are both satisfied of the safety of the unfortunate young lady, and that due care is taken of the wounds inflicted by the

brutal conduct of your assistant; and his removal from about her I positively insist on."

"Whatever you wish, I shall be too happy to comply with, my dear Sir," replied he: "I myself will attend to the lady, and you shall see that she is safe and well; but I cannot consent that this gentleman's presence should be allowed to renew the paroxysm which is, I trust, by this time subsided. In the interests of both parties—in the interests of humanity—"

"Hush, hush, doctor, no more of this, if you please. Do you engage that he shall be free?" said I.

"You *must*, Sir," said the housekeeper, with strong emphasis; "I am pledged to it, and you know how you are bound to grant this first request I ever made of you. I have sworn to this young man—you saw me take the oath—that he shall not be forced to the garden-house. Do you now ratify this pledge?"

"That he shall not be *forced* into the garden-house?" asked the doctor, with a cunning and quibbling look, which I alone seemed to remark.

"Yes," said the young man; "on that condition I am come back. Do you confirm it?"

"Most willingly. God forbid that any thing should be done here for tyranny's sake! It was your own impetuosity, my good Sir, that drove us to harsh measures; but the welfare of my fellow-creatures——"

"Enough, enough, doctor!" interrupted I; "we only want your *practice* now—not your *profession*. Come now, in the first place, convince me of the lady's safety. This gentleman will, I am sure, consent to remain below stairs. I recommend you to do it," said I, turning to the Englishman.

"Whatever is for the best," replied he. "I only wish for her safety: you will see her situation, and tell it to me truly?"

"Depend on me," said I, and I followed the doctor up the narrow stairs. We entered the room, the door being ajar, and I saw, in the little bed which filled a small recess, the beautiful countenance of the object of my solicitude. She was pale, and apparently quite exhausted. Her eyes were nearly closed, her lips apart, and a listless and inanimate air in every feature. She was close covered by the bed-clothes, with the exception of her right arm, which lay outside the counterpane, swathed carefully up, and the stains of blood here and there oozing through the linen bandage. The woman sat by her side on a low chair.

"Poor, dear creature!" said the doctor in a plaintive whisper; "you see she has every possible care taken of her, even without my interference. Be assured that, let appearances be what they may, there breathes not on earth a more tender, considerate man than—"

"Do not name the scoundrel, Sir!" said I, aloud. "You must positively promise me that

he shall be wholly removed from his attendance here, or I and the gentleman below will watch at the door all night. Say nothing to me in his favour; he is an odious wretch!"

"Thank you, Sir," muttered a hollow voice behind me—"I return you my humble thanks, all I can offer you *at present!*"

A low bow accompanied the words, and the sallow doctor retreated out of the room, and entered one on the opposite side of the landing-place, slowly closing the door after him.

"That condition I insist on," said I to the chief of the medical triumvirate, without noticing the interruption; "and I care not if it be pleasing or the contrary to any of you."

"No intemperance, my good Sir," said the doctor, in his usual smooth way; "every thing shall be to your liking—every thing. Shall we now go down stairs and look after the gentle-

man below? You will be able to satisfy him of the lady's well-doing."

"I shall tell him what I have seen," answered I; and I left the room, throwing back one look on that face of exquisite beauty which looked so coldly unconscious of its loveliness, and scarcely gave evidence of life.

The agitated lover had stolen on tiptoe up the stairs, and listened on the landing-place to my last few words. He pressed my hand between his, and, heaving a deep sigh, he turned quickly from the door, which formed no barrier to his mind's advances, but which he considered himself bound, in honour to the doctor, and in delicacy to *her*, not to pass.

It was now dark. We retired to the doctor's study, and some slight refreshment of fruit and wine were partaken of by us all. The young man's mind seemed quite composed. He talked of the false conduct of his supposed friend, in joining with the doctor and his

people to place him in the garden-house; but he did not speak with asperity, and his feelings seemed softened towards every one, from the mysterious influence, I thought, of the atmosphere with which love can so powerfully imbue the mind. He returned many thanks to myself and the housekeeper, who not only sat with us, at the young man's particular request, but, with mechanical accuracy, helped us each to our exact portions of fruit and cake, and served us with sweet wine and liqueurs. The interest she appeared to take in the unhappy stranger gave me a high opinion of her heart, and all that afterwards occurred tended to strengthen my belief in her sincerity.

At the doctor's recommendation, the Englishman took a glass of some composing cordial, soon after which he expressed a wish to retire to bed, and in a short time I was pleased to see him soundly asleep in a very comfortable chamber adjoining the doctor's bed-room, and, like it, opening into the study. I had,

from time to time, ascertained, both by the housekeeper's inquiries and my own, that the young lady quietly reposed, and seemed to suffer but little from the injury done to her arm. The doctor several times went to her apartment, twice with me, and oftener alone; but at each visit leaving the Englishman unobstructedly in the study, and shewing no overwatchfulness on his account. All this inspired us both with perfect confidence, and I finally retired to my room, about one o'clock, greatly satisfied with the turn things appeared to take, and anticipating, for the next morning, more of good to the lovers than I could rationally account for to myself.

CHAPTER VI.

WHATEVER the sensation might have been, whether apprehension on my own account, anxiety on that of others, or if, as I honestly think, a mixture of both, in which the latter predominated, it is certain that I never felt less at my ease than when I lay down in my bed, extinguished my candle, and began to reflect on my situation. The reader can run over, faster than I could recapitulate them, all the events of the evening, and all the associated train of feelings arising from the recollection; and it may be imagined how unpleasantly the various painful objects appeared to my mind, in the

gloom of my attic chamber. The insinuated threat of the yellow doctor was not the least prominent subject of inquietude; and the ambiguous pledge given by the head physician, for the safety of the young Englishman, appeared, in the obscurity of my situation and my thoughts, still more questionable than before.

After about half an hour, of what I may acknowledge to have been *suffering*, I rose from my bed, and, groping about through the chairs and tables, I succeeded in collecting a portion of my clothes; then laid hold of my trusty stick —the seasoned branch of a Medoc vine, which, before its office of supporting my steps, had furnished plenty of material for unsteadying those of others—and thus armed, I softly opened my door, and stole down stairs on tiptoe.

All that part of the main building where I was lodged, lay in deep repose. A dying lamp glimmered in one of the corridors, but no other sign of animation appeared as I descended; and no sound caught my ear but the low breathings

of the sleepers, as I at times stopped and listened, in fear that the creaking of a plank under my foot might have disturbed the drowsy guardians of the house. When I reached the bottom of the stairs, I cautiously entered the passage communicating with the doctor's study, and I approached the door. All was hushed within, and I was satisfied that matters were as I had left them. Thus assured as to the safety of the stranger, I breathed more freely; and my anxieties naturally took the direction of the quarter where his lovely mistress lay. I accordingly unbolted a little door, opening into the vaulted way, by which I had originally entered the house, under the guidance of Michel. This led me unobstructedly into the garden; and I was in a minute or two under the window of the room where I had left the object of my present anxiety.

The faint beams of a night-lamp filled the crevices of the window blinds with that shadowy light, which, let it come from what casement it

may, always brings to my mind notions of illness and watching, though it as often proceeds from the dull taper of the sleepy student, or the starved rush that burns in the chamber of penurious superstition. I stood close to the doorway leading to the stair, and I distinctly caught an unusual and somewhat undefinable noise, repeated at irregular intervals. It was a dull and undetermined sound, like the stroke of a muffled instrument, as if a hammer in a trembling hand drove nails to the head, by stealth. My blood curdled in my veins, as the thought rushed past me that it was a coffin which they were fastening down.

I put my foot upon the stair, and was proceeding quickly up, when the shuffling sound of feet above made me pause a moment, and I then heard the closing of a door towards the courtyard, and the tramp of steps approaching. I immediately drew back, and out into the garden; and, concealing myself behind a clump of shrubs, I distinctly saw the persons that silently

came forward. Michel, with a lantern in his hand, came first; and then I marked the figure of a priest, whose vestments made me, at the first glance, take him for a woman. A boy, dressed in a surplice, followed him close, bearing a crucifix; and they all passed into the low portal, and up the stairs. I stepped cautiously after their steps, and heard the door of the room gently closed, the light disappeared, and all was dark and silent.

I will not attempt to define what I felt at that moment. I do not wish to exaggerate, either as to the situation or the sensations it gave rise to. My steps seemed to turn involuntarily towards the garden house, and I was soon under the deep gloom of its walls. Confused murmurings came forth—the eternal hum of madness; and an occasional harsh voice, commanding silence among the unquiet spirits, was all I heard beside. I then walked, with a hurried step, towards the terrace, and I felt a relief in leaning against the

balustrade, from which I looked into the chaotic darkness beneath.

Nothing was to be distinguished below, but the shade of the vineyards and olive groves; while the fulness of perfume which rose around oppressed me by its cloying richness, unbroken by the slightest breath of air. Many nightingales poured forth their serenades to nature, in its depth of sleep; and the gurgling rustle of a rivulet through sedge and pebbles, was the only tone of life that broke earth's solemn stillness.

I gazed for a few minutes on the mass of gloom around me; and I then moved, without reflection or object, in the direction of the little door opening out on the meadow and the burying ground. As I approached it I heard sounds, which the quickness, arising from my late conjecture, at once told me to be those of a spade striking into the ground. I felt no doubt but that a grave was in the act of preparation; yet I could not resist a pang of painful surprise,

when I discovered a man employed in making one, by the light of a lantern which glimmered through the long grass and weeds upon the edge. He seemed to work well in his vocation, without "a feeling of his business;" digging away with a careless air, and flinging up the mould, indifferent as to whom it might once have formed and fashioned. His solemn employment had clearly no solemnity for him. It was indeed "a property of easiness;" and, in another mood, I should have been pleased to enter into parley with this knocker-about of skulls, and learn a lesson from his philosophy. But the horrid thoughts which now began to ferment in my mind, unfitted me for any thing but the mechanical observance of what was passing before my eyes; and I had just recollection enough of my situation to understand the necessity of concealment, till the scene I witnessed should bc finally closed. I therefore placed myself in the dark shelter of the cypress tree that shadowed the door; and I there awaited the progress of the

ceremony, which a shuddering instinct told me was about to be performed.

The hollow tread of the coffin-bearers, in the garden behind me, soon spoke in sounds of fearful reality. The entrance of the priest and his attendant boy into the meadow from the little door, brought the palpable evidence before me; but the calm, unimpassioned countenance of the holy man told no secret to my anxious curiosity. Neither did the unmeaning visage of the sleepy boy. Next came the coffin, borne by two men, whose legs alone were visible beneath the dark pall that covered them and their sad burthen. A man wrapped in a cloak closed the *cortége:* and the beam from a lantern, which he held before him, flashed sufficiently upwards to shew me that it was the yellow doctor, who thus consistently wound up the last scene of those mysterious events, in which he had been so conspicuous an actor. I shuddered and shrunk back, as he brushed against the branches of the tree that shaded me—and he seemed to start

and look round for security from the alarm he had awakened in himself.

I cautiously followed the group along the meadow path, and stopped outside the wicket which bounded it, and through which they passed. Sheltered by the hedge, I saw the rapid progress of the ceremony, the lowering of the coffin, the shovelling in of the earth, the closing of the grave. I heard the low mutterings of the priest, and the more shrill, but as indistinct, responses of the attendant boy ; and I closely marked the unmoved figure and unchanging face of the other unemployed spectators of the scene.

" *His* work is done," thought I, " and the passionless wretch has no remorse, to vary a look or agitate a limb ! And has the world, indeed, for ever closed upon the lovely victim to his and to others' crimes ? Did *his* hand do the deed ? And can such things really be ?"

I could not, during the progress of the burial, muster calmness enough to enter col-

lectedly into such a train of thought, as I felt to be requisite for one who would effectively pursue the scrutiny I was resolved to undertake. That the unfortunate girl had been unfairly hastened from her earthly tenure, I could not doubt. That the baffled violator of principle, and duty, and feeling, stood gazing into the grave for which his hand had furnished the tenant, I was firmly convinced. That the officiating priest, and the other necessary agents of the last awful office, were innocent accessories, I was willing to believe. My indignation was solely directed against the wretch who had, I felt assured, caused the death, at the thought of which I trembled, in mingled rage and horror; and I made many deep and unuttered vows of vengeance, which I knew not at the moment how to execute.

I thought, however, that one important point would be to mark surely the faces of each of the associates in what I witnessed, that certainty of their identity might aid me in the inquisition I

meant to demand at the hands of the magistrates, and of which I felt I could produce but vague evidence. With this object, I carefully bent my looks upon the priest, the boy, and the grave-digger; and I continued the observation by the fitful glimpses of the two lanterns, until all was nearly concluded:—and then a glance to the eastward showed me the opening streaks of dawn breaking through the gloom, and warned me of the necessity for instant retreat. I accordingly stepped cautiously back upon the pathway, quickly gained the garden door, and was soon once more under cover of the *Maison de Santé*.

I passed cautiously by the doctor's study, and regained my own room. I lay down on the bed, and turning my eyes to one of the open windows which looked eastwards, I endeavoured to regulate and concentre my thoughts, for the purpose I had resolved to pursue. But, as is so often the case with any methodized attempt, I found it utterly impossible to succeed. I tossed about,

bewildered and confused, in vain efforts to arrange some plan for the certain punishment of the guilty villain, and with nothing fixed in my mind, but a determination to bring him to justice. But at times I felt myself start up convulsively, as the shocking thought of the murdered girl came upon me. The figures of the yellow doctor, and the assistant woman, who, I had no doubt, had lent her ready hand to the deed, seemed to flit before me; and the poor victim herself was presented in all the horrid combinations of suffering which fancy could invent.

Two or three hours must have passed in this state of conscious, yet unreasoning agitation, for I was aroused from it into one of a still more painful reality, by a broad burst of sunshine which flashed into the chamber; and I saw, in utter astonishmsnt, that the sun had already mounted far above the horizon, and had just forced his way through a mass of heavy clouds, which had till then imprisoned his beams.

Quick as the light thus breaking on me, came the recollection of the young Englishman, and I sprang from my bed with a feeling of horror, at the new-born thought that he too might be in danger, if not marked for destruction. I speedily dressed, and descended the stairs with a rapid foot, careless of whom I might disturb, or, if I reflected at all, desirous rather of a host of evidence to the day-light scrutiny on which I was bent.

When I reached the door of the doctor's study, I started back, surprised to find it open. I looked in, but could distinguish nothing distinctly, the window being still closed, and the dull light admitted by the door-way shewing no object much beyond it. As I remembered the localities of the room, I had no difficulty in groping my way to the one adjoining, where I had a few hours before left the Englishman asleep. I therefore cautiously walked towards it, and with outstretched arms, and somewhat aided by the dim light, I was soon within it—the door being

also open. This circumstance caused me a pang of suspicion, but I had no time for speculation on my sensations or their causes. I quickly stood by the bed side, and I held my head down to listen for the breathings of the sleeper. I heard no sound.

With an agitation every moment increasing I put forth my hands, and felt in every direction for my friend—for so, in my dread of his peril, I could not help considering the stranger. Nothing met my touch but the cold sheeting, for the coverlid had been thrown aside, and the bed was tenantless. I instantly drew back the window-curtains, and threw the casement open; and, examining the room, I found that every thing belonging to the young man was removed.

I stood for a while transfixed in surprised alarm. I knew not what to conjecture. It was evident that no struggle had taken place. The bed and pillow bore the mark of the sleeper's form, but no part of the covering or drapery

was in the least degree disturbed. Every article of furniture stood in the places where I had seen them the previous night; and the whole appearance of the room gave the lie to my first apprehensions, that it had been the scene of some violent deed.

What, then, could have become of the stranger? Had some fabricated story lured him away? Had his false friend returned, and induced him to quit the place to which he so lately felt himself bound by the strongest of all ties? Or what were the causes of his disappearance? These questions rose rapidly and together in my mind, and ere they could assume the consistency of reflection, he who could best have answered them entered the room, and stood before me: this was the chief doctor. Believing that I saw in his evident amazement at my presence a certain proof of guilt, though I could not calculate its extent, I determined not to lose the opportunity of extorting from

his surprise what I had little hope of recovering from his conscience.

"You start back, Sir! You are astonished to see me here!" said I, in the most peremptory tone of cross-questioning.

"And well I may be, my dear Sir: I little expected the good luck of so early a visit from the person I so ardently wished to see."

"You might easily have gratified that wish, did it indeed exist; but I much fear—"

"Do you, then, suppose I would disturb you, after the agitated evening you passed, for the sake of my own anxiety? You little know me. Could selfish considerations—"

"Doctor, I tell you, in one word, this canting and cringing will not now avail; I am not to be trifled with. Where is my countryman, whom I left last night under your care, and who is no longer here? I insist on an answer—an ample and immediate answer!"

"Time, time, my good Sir! You shall have

a sufficient reply, and satisfactory, I trust. To gratify my friends—"

"Do not class me among them, Sir; I disown the title: answer my question!"

"Pray sit down, my dear Sir."

"No, Sir. I swear before Heaven not to know repose of any kind till *this* mystery is cleared up, and my countryman's safety secured!"

"Sir, I honour your feelings: it is thus that Englishmen, by their noble nationality—"

"Stand off!" exclaimed I, putting an end to this broken colloquy; and, roughly removing the open hand which the insinuating hypocrite had familiarly placed on my shoulder, I was hastily quitting the room, vowing to take summary means for procuring information, when he caught me by the arm, and, with his most sycophantic tone, entreated me calmly to listen to him.

"Where is my countryman? Answer me at once, and without shuffling or preface!" said I.

"Well, then, since you must know it, he is safe and well in the garden-house," replied the doctor.

These words fell upon me with a heavy and stupifying weight. I was thoroughly shocked, and stood for some minutes silent, while the doctor ran on in a fluent and *defensive* gabble, as I supposed; but I did not comprehend a syllable.

"Good God!" said I, at length recovering myself, "and have you been base enough to break your solemn pledge?"

"Heaven forbid!" answered the doctor. "No; the word of a man of honour should be as inviolate as—"

"What, then, am I to believe that he went quietly and of his own accord into that hateful den?"

"You may, indeed, believe it, for it is perfectly true."

"Then let me see him instantly, that I may

learn from himself the reasons for such a compliance."

"That, my good Sir, is impossible just now. His situation requires the greatest calmness; he must not be disturbed. Besides, it is in direct violation of the rules of the garden-house to allow strangers to enter there. But," continued the doctor, seeing I was again about to reply too roughly—"but you, I promise you, shall form an exception to the rule. You shall see your countryman when he is in a state to receive you: he is this moment reposing from the soothing effects of a warm bath."

"Reposing! Soothing effects!" uttered I, all my suspicions reviving. "Why, what has happened? What need had he of *soothing* remedies?"

"Why, you see, my very good Sir, the fact is that although he was removed without the least objection on his part—to that I pledge you my honour—still he afterwards became extremely violent, and we were forced (unwil-

lingly, Heaven knows !) to have recourse to strong means to calm him."

" I know not what to think of it," said I : " I will not, however, *do* any thing rashly, nor *say* aught without good reason. I shall wait your pleasure to admit me to see this young man ; and on your own head be the responsibility if any thing wrong should happen to *him*."

" Surely, my dear Sir, that emphasis means something ? What is upon your mind ? Speak out candidly."

The doctor's practised face was impenetrable to the gaze which I fixed on it. He did not acknowledge, in a single feature, or by the movement of one muscle, the justice of the reproachful glance. I thought words would have no better chance with him ; and not wishing to waste them, or weaken the effect of the measures I meant to take, I resolved to retire to my room, and carefully note down what had passed before my eyes, and thus lay the regular

foundation for all my future proceedings. Little did I think that the chance discovery of these very minutes several years afterwards, would induce me to make public, in this way, the occurrences they referred to.

I once more mounted the stairs, and entered my chamber; and, with as much calmness as I could command, I committed to paper a statement of what I had observed since my entering the *Maison de Santé*, in reference not only to the Englishman, but to his hapless mistress, from the yellow doctor's conduct at the dinner table, to the closing in of the grave. This task performed, and still no summons arriving from the doctor, I was resolved to wait no longer; and I again descended, determined to enforce, if possible, the immediate performance of his promise that I should see my countryman.

I knocked at the study door, and receiving no answer, I opened it and walked in. It was empty, and I immediately turned from it to seek the doctor, whom I supposed to be at the

garden-house. On my way out, one of the men servants, who had taken so active a part in the events of the preceding evening, passed rapidly by me, with an expression of alarm visibly marked on his countenance. In the natural, but often misplaced avidity with which we attribute such a symptom to the object of our own anxiety, I felt that this frightened face had some connexion with the Englishman's situation. I accordingly laid hold of the wretch, and peremptorily asked him what had happened?

"Don't ask me, Sir; you will know it soon enough—but I was not to blame. Let me go; let me go."

"What is it, then? I will hold you fast till you tell me."

"I am sworn not, Sir—I dare not betray what passes here."

"Where are you hurrying to, then?"

"To the mairie, Sir—to fetch the mayor, that he may examine the ——. Let me go; it

is as much as my life is worth to be seen with you."

A violent effort to escape from my grasp accompanied these last words, and he ran off in the direction of the court-yard. My first impulse was to follow him and force out the truth in the magistrate's presence, but a voice detained me by exclaiming, in a mysterious tone,—

"I will tell you all about it. He is *dead!*"

It was the fat lady who spoke. She stood at a little distance, among the shrubs, and looked at me with a vacant gaze.

"Dead!" echoed I, my mind fixed on but one object to whom the word could apply—"Impossible! Who told you so? What do you mean?"

"What I say. He is *dead.*"

Her cold, apathetic look, and the oracular air with which this boding sentence was uttered, were oppressively annoying. I could not bear to stand parleying with this strange mixture of

reason and folly, and I rushed towards the garden-house to obtain the direct removal or confirmation of my fears. As I closely approached this hateful den, the sound of voices coming from it made me pause a moment; and I distinguished the tones of the doctor and the housekeeper—his in entreaty and expostulation, hers in loud reproach.

"Be pacified, my dear Jacqueline," said he; "of what use now is this? Can it bring him to life again?"

"No, no—it cannot. All my bitter sorrow is of no avail—I know it well. His fine eyes will never open—his manly limbs are stiffened in death—and who is to blame? Is it not I? Did not I bring him back? Am I not perjured before God and man? Oh doctor, doctor, this crime will hang heavy on your soul!"

"Tut, tut, 'tis only a man the less, and a few years the sooner. You make too much of such an event. Besides, *you* are not to blame—no

one indeed—no force was used to bring him back."

"You solemnly ratified my promise that he should not be placed in the garden-house!"

"Not *forced* into it, Jacqueline—and he was not. We carried him to it in his heavy sleep."

"And who lulled him to security? Was it not I—am I not the cause of all?"

"No, no—I mixed the sleeping draught, not *you*. All the blame is mine, if any one's; but it was his own deed."

"God grant it was for the sake of the souls of others! Oh, may Heaven forgive me for being even an innocent actor in this dreadful scene!"

I could no longer bear this. No doubtful meaning attached itself to what was spoken. None but the Englishman could have been thus alluded to. I burst through the shrubs that concealed me from the path, and I stood in the middle of it as the speakers came towards me.

As I burst forth, the doctor stood still, and seemed wholly thrown off his guard. The

housekeeper sprang towards me, with streaming eyes, and a countenance of deep anguish.

"Oh, spare me; in mercy, spare your reproaches!" exclaimed she, with a choked utterance. "You can say nothing so dreadful as what I feel. I am the cause of all—it was all my doing. What could have urged me to bring him back? Was it not to save his mistress from pollution? You do not believe I meant to betray him? But I am the cause of all!"

"Hush, hush, Jacqueline," whispered the doctor. "He knows nothing of what has happened."

"Yes, I do know it," exclaimed I. "Your voice should be lower, and your acts still darker, if you hope to escape the justice I will invoke. Yes, I do know it—another murder is added to the list of crimes which call for vengeance on this hateful place, and on all of you, a vile gang together."

"Murder, Sir!" cried the doctor, in a tone too bullying for perfect innocence, yet too bold

for actual guilt—"Murder! have a care what you say, Mister Englishman; or I shall find means to make you pay for this outrage."

"Oh no, Sir—there was no murder. Do not accuse him of that. It was bad enough, God knows, but not murder."

"Where, then, is my countryman? Is he not dead? What has destroyed him? Was he not alive and well, two hours ago—less, indeed—when I spoke with you in your study?"

"True," replied the doctor, to whom I had put these questions—"true, he is dead—and he was so, even while we spoke together. Even then—at the very moment, perhaps—he destroyed himself, in a paroxysm of insanity."

"Then, by Heavens, you *drove* him mad!" exclaimed I. "But I do not believe it. If he be dead, it was not by his own hand he died. There has been some foul play. Where is your chief assistant? The sallow-complexioned one? Does he know anything of this frightful event?"

"My poor friend! He does indeed—and

wretched he is at the result. He was the first to hasten at the cry of alarm, and he vainly plunged his lancet into the poor lad's throat, even from the carotid artery no blood would come. He was stone dead."

"God forgive me! — God forgive me!" cried the housekeeper, wringing her hands, and weeping aloud.

"You make *my* blood run cold," said I. "How did this happen, if indeed you speak the truth?"

"How did it happen? naturally enough, and simply too—the way such things terminate nine times out of ten, particularly with Englishmen. Driven desperate at finding himself secured, he was not an instant alone before he strangled himself."

"But why secure him? Why leave him alone? Why leave him the means of suicide, if, as you persist in saying, he *was* mad?"

"Ay, Sir, now you ask rational questions, and I willingly answer them. It was indeed my intention to have told you of this event, and made you a witness to the legal inquiry about

to be entered into. I was on the way to seek you when you burst into the path."

False as I knew this to be, I made no reply. I was utterly shocked at the event, the details of which I was getting by piece-meal. I listened without interruption ; and the doctor's relation, true or false, was only broken in upon by the housekeeper's convulsive sobs and unconnected exclamations of self-reproach and sorrow.

" Yes, my dear Sir, it was my intention to have quietly and calmly prepared you for this sad news. I know, by self-experience, the shock its abrupt disclosure must give to a sensitive heart. Besides, in a highly excited state of nervous irritation, there is no knowing the effects these sudden surprises may create. However, as I said before, the man is no more—and the regrets of sensibility and affection, like the flowers strewed upon a grave, may adorn, but cannot animate the dead."

A pause followed this metaphor, which the doctor had no doubt often served up on such

occasions, and a keen glance over the convenient pocket handkerchief which he held for a moment to his face, watched the effect of his eloquence. It only added to my impatience, which he seemed to perceive, for he immediately resumed—

"Yes, my dear Sir, when we conversed together this morning, I believed that all was well—that the poor young gentleman had recovered from his fury at discovering the restraint he was in—for I must tell you that I felt it necessary for his own safety and well being to have him removed in his sleep from the room where you left him. Why these deep groans, my good Jacqueline? Neither your pledge nor my honour were compromised; no force was used. Yes, yes, Sir, I will go on. I read your anxiety in your looks. Well, Sir, you will acquit me of dishonour on that score. On the faith of a physician, I assure you, his removal was quite necessary. The sequel proves him to have been mad. Instead of calmly submitting to the salu-

tary restraint, and the remedies we proposed on his awaking, he was quite furious. He pushed me from him—struck down my excellent friend and first assistant—raved wildly of the young lady—talked of love, and liberty, and God knows what—and when we at last forced him down on the bed and tied his arms, he burst into tears, and wept like a child."

"Poor fellow—unfortunate young man—may Heaven pity him and take him—what agony must have wrung his mind!" exclaimed the housekeeper in a fresh burst of grief.

"Well, Sir," continued the Doctor, "being much afflicted by his distress, I removed the *camisole*."

"The *camisole!*" echoed the housekeeper, and the word seemed to penetrate to my heart.

"Yes, Jacqueline, I removed the *camisole*. Don't start at that word, Sir—many a man has it saved from destruction!"

"Many a one has it driven to desperation!" said the housekeeper.

"Yes, Sir," continued the doctor, unheeding her interruption, "worked on by my sensibility, I fatally removed the best security for the patient's safety. But he appeared utterly exhausted—worn out, as it were, by his struggle—and he calmly consented to be placed in a warm bath. Apparently soothed and refreshed by this remedy, he again lay down in bed, and a faithful guardian was left to watch in his chamber. But no sooner was my back turned, (my worthy friend and first assistant being already out of the way,) than he persuaded the man to quit his post, feigning a wish for repose, and declaring he could not sink to sleep with another person in the room. The man—poor Ambrose—(a kind-hearted fellow—he did it for the best)—relying on the good faith of the patient, complied with this treacherous request; and scarcely could he have closed the door, when your countryman—most dishonourably, I must say, and with the peculiar cunning of insane persons—put an end to his existence."

"God forgive and pity him!" murmured the housekeeper.

The doctor stood still, took a pinch of snuff, and seemed to consider his recital as finished. But I was far from being satisfied. I passed over the doctor's reasoning on the point of honour, the treachery and cunning of the unfortunate young man; and I asked him to explain how he had perpetrated the desperate deed.

"Ay, Sir," replied he, "you may well ask that question, for I still ask it of myself. How could he succeed in effecting his purpose, when every reasonable means were carefully removed? Why, Sir, the most trifling thing that could be rationally turned to self-destruction was taken away—not even his cravat—not as much as a nail—not a pin was left in the room. But, Sir, madness will effect miracles in such a case—and you shall hear of the singular method taken by this maniac to baffle our precautions, and, you will excuse my saying, ungratefully to annoy us,

and throw a stigma on this establishment—for assuredly he could have no other motive in strangling himself."

"For Heaven's sake, Doctor, don't speak thus! How *can* you feel enmity to the dead!" cried the housekeeper.

"Jacqueline, you are totally unable to enter into my feelings—so hold your tongue. I forbid you to interfere further in this matter. Have you no consideration for me?—no resentment for the insult offered to me;—to me personally—to my professional reputation—by the fact of one of my patients having killed himself? If he had had even the honour, the delicacy, to leave a line or two behind him to thank me for my care of him, I should not have blamed him in the least; but as it is, I never will forgive him—never! But, see, here comes the mayor to examine into the transaction. I will do all I can to smother my just resentment. You may retire to the house, Jacqueline. Now, Sir, you can, if you choose it, attend and

hear the witnesses give their statements to the magistrate. I am willing to pardon your hasty expression a while ago—I am not a man to bear enmity for inconsiderate warmth, but a deliberate insult I never will forgive—never ! *Monsieur le Maire*, I have the honour to offer you my civilities. I ask you a thousand pardons for disturbing you so early this morning. But what can be said? If foreigners will, without respect to the authorities, or, I might say, to individuals, fix on unseasonable hours to violate the laws in this way, you know I am not responsible. I am sure *Monsieur le Maire* will acquit me of any want of due regard to himself or to the magistracy."

"*Monsieur le Docteur* will not do me the injustice to imagine that I could suspect him of aught inconsistent with the most perfect propriety and good breeding."

"Ah, *Monsieur le Maire*, you are too good—too indulgent—I shall be proud to endeavour to merit such distinguished approbation."

"Not at all, *Monsieur le Docteur*. A man like you has no want of eulogy. Your reputation — your well known character — allow me—"

Here the mayor held forth his snuff-box, and the doctor obsequiously plunged his thumb and three fingers into the proffered contents— the only compliment not thoroughly empty which was bandied between them. I felt the most impatient contempt of the callous physician and the cold-blooded functionary, who could so employ themselves, on the very threshold, as I might call it, of despair and crime. The poor housekeeper seemed affected by still stronger emotions; and the doctor at length proposed to the mayor to proceed to the arrangement of "the little affair," as he called it.

"Most willingly," answered the mayor. "Public duty requires this examination on my part, unnecessary as I consider any inquiry to be, beyond that which you yourself might

answer. Your respectable character is a sufficient guarantee."

"Ah, *Monsieur le Maire!*" replied the doctor, cutting him short, with a cringe extraordinary, and ushering him into the garden-house, the door of which had been unbolted and unbarred at his knock.

"Now, Sir, if you please," continued he, addressing me, and pulling off his black silk cap, and I stepped forward, followed by the housekeeper, who declared she would also attend, notwithstanding the doctor's hint to the contrary. He shewed no disposition to contend the point with her; and in a minute more the low door was closed behind us by Michel, and we pursued our way along the narrow corridor. The doctor now took the lead, and stepped briskly on before the measured steps of the mayor, on whose track I followed closely, the housekeeper coming next, and Michel bringing up the rear. The aspect of the place was horrible—low, narrow, and dark—the doors of the

several rooms on each side firmly closed, and the most discordant noises piercing through them, groans, shrieks, and in one or two places bursts of appalling laughter. The hapless maniacs had been, no doubt, cautioned to be quiet, and, with the cross-grained tact of insanity, had thus violated the commands of their tyrants.

"Come on, come on, Sir—fear nothing!" said the doctor, from the farthest end of the corridor, to the cautious magistrate, who gave evident symptoms of alarm; and we all silently moved forward to the place of our immediate destination.

The mayor shrunk back, and shuddered as he looked before him into the room. I sympathised with the shock he suffered, as if I had held a link of an electrical chain. The housekeeper tremblingly grasped my arm. Michel pushed her forward; and, following the impulsion, in a moment more we were all in the room, where stood the yellow doctor, and Ambrose, the attendant, who had had the care of the

Englishman, and who entered the place by a back entrance, after he had conducted the mayor and left him in parley with the chief doctor in the garden.

One other object completed the awful and truly shocking appearance of the room—or, rather let me call it, the cell, for it was small, scarcely high enough to allow a tall man to stand upright, with one closely barred window, and totally unfurnished, but by a chair, a small table, and a mean ungarnished bed. On this wretched bier lay the outstretched corpse of the young Englishman, displaying the fine proportions of his limbs, for it was covered only by the shirt which had furnished him the means of self-destruction, and down the front of which two narrow strips had been ingeniously torn. His features shewed but little of the distortion common in cases of violent death. The eyes and mouth had been closed by some accustomed hand, and the fine profile was placidly exposed. But the livid colouring of strangulation was on

his face. A still darker trace was evident all round the throat; and on the left side of it a broad and bloodless gash, made by the too tardy lancet, shewed that life had ceased to circulate when the blade was applied.

On the table by the bed side lay the simple apparatus of death. This was one of the bedstead screws loosened from its place, to which was tied the two strips of linen, torn from the shirt and knotted firmly together. With this a tourniquet had been constructed; and with such an apparently fragile noose the strong-nerved arm of despair completed the deed.

The mayor, who was an old timid man, but compassionate and clear sighted, seemed sensibly affected while he gazed on this sad spectacle of premature death. The housekeeper could not support the view. No sooner did her eye rest on the livid face than all the violence of womanly weakness broke forth, and she was removed from the room by the men-servants, insensible and in strong hysterics.

The mayor proceeded to his examination—but what a mockery of an inquest it displayed! A few hurried questions put to the two doctors and the attendants, loosely answered, and briefly noted down, sufficed for the legal ratification of the doctor's recital. All was admitted, and recorded as fact. How insufficient an inquiry into so awful an event! Not an oath administered—not a witness sifted—not a secret elicited, if there were such—not a fact established, by any testimony of even decent solemnity!

"Good God!" thought I, "is this indeed enough! Can *this* satisfy the watchful jealousy of judicial caution? Does the law require no more? And are whole millions content with such imbecile legislation? What, after all, if this story be not true—if this man has perished by some other hand than his own—if this den of suffering be indeed the depôt of murder!"

Such were the notions that arose, as the old mayor took down his imperfect memoranda; and as he prepared to depart, declaring the inquest

to be finished, I felt stupified, and unable to move.

"Well, Sir," said the doctor to me, with an air of unfeeling selfishness that filled me with disgust, "I trust you are quite satisfied. You see the respectable magistrate has examined this affair—you see that our laws allow every indulgence to any foreign gentleman who may cut himself off without any reservation for the motives of the deed, though it were perhaps well if some posthumous disgrace, some *ex post facto* punishment, justified the insulted honour of a Frenchman! But, Sir," continued he, taking a large pinch of snuff, "the magnanimity of our code scorns to wage war against the dead—no stake is driven through the poor mortal remains in *our* country."

"It would be well, Sir," said I, "that individuals followed so good an example, and forebore to outrage the mind that they may have forced to madness—*if* indeed the body"—but I stopped short, not merely from a feeling of the

uselessness of this contest, but from the conviction, which a moment's cool reflection had established, that the unfortunate young man had truly been his own destroyer. All the appearances of the place confirmed the fact. There was no evidence of a struggle, not a mark of violence on the body, nor on the fragile garment which covered it, but the trace where the shreds were deliberately torn down. But the strongest proof of such having been the mode of his death lay, I thought, in the impossibility of such a tale having been *invented*, and such improbable means imagined and asserted for the accomplishment of the deed. But having seen the fatal evidences, and heard the details, I firmly believe that such was the fact; and since that day I have never doubted that the only parallel death which I have ever heard of—that of Pichegru—was truly stated, although I had before considered it impossible.

"Yes, doctor," resumed I, as the old magistrate stood close to me, complaisantly bowing,

and throwing a last look of compassion on the corpse, "I am so far satisfied in this unhappy affair as to believe the recital I have heard. Any observation now as to the causes of the sad catastrophe would be of little avail. But there is another matter," and I here looked full at the yellow doctor, "of a more questionable nature, into which I feel it a bounden duty to inquire, and to which I must request the mayor's best attention. In one word, gentlemen—I address you both—I witnessed the funeral of the lady in the church-yard last night."

"Well, Sir, and what then?" said the chief doctor, with great composure, while his assistant shewed no change.

"And what then?" echoed I. "Is it thus you allude to any thing connected with the mysterious death and midnight burial of that hapless female?"

"Lord bless you, Sir, there was no mystery in it. She died a natural death, and a happy relief to her it was, for the world does not hold

one object to attach her to it. She was buried at night—we always bury our dead at night—the law allows it, Sir, and both death and burial are duly certified by myself and my friend and first assistant here, and the papers deposited in the office of *Monsieur le Maire* an hour ago."

"Yes, Sir, that I fully confirm, if you are interested in the subject," said the mayor, offering me a pinch of snuff, and moving onwards.

I knew not what to say. I saw that it was vain to attempt to penetrate the shield of professional tact and official sanction which covered the transactions of the place. I accordingly moved on, with the others, through the garden, silently but fruitlessly endeavouring to arrange my thoughts into some systematic train.

Michel, who had reached the house before we approached it, now came briskly up to the doctor, and whispered something to him.

"Indeed! Already!" exclaimed the doctor, and turning to his sallow assistant, he added

something in a lower tone, of which I only caught the last words—" the parents (or the *relations*, for the French word is the same for both,) are come to take her away." And then addressing me, he said, " Come on, Sir, and you will see the departure of one in whom you are interested."

The fat lady was the only person who now inspired me with any peculiar interest beyond the pity I felt for all the forced inmates of the horrid place. But a minute or two shewed me that an object did exist to fill me with astonishment, and a momentary delight, that almost effaced the recent shock, but which as quickly subsided into a gloomy association with it.

Slowly supported down the narrow stairs by the attendant nurse, and emerging from the little portal, the face and form of the beautiful sufferer, whom I believed to be in her grave, broke upon me like a vision of a purer world, and made me start back in doubt, which was succeeded first by the delight, and next by the

gloom I have described. Almost incredulous, I witnessed the meeting between the lovely girl and her father and mother, who came in person at the summons of her lover's treacherous companion, to snatch her, as he and they thought, from the danger of the Englishman's ardent love. They little knew they could but divorce her from the neighbourhood of his breathless body! The sweet girl rushed into their outstretched arms like one reprieved from death. They deluged her with tears, and, utterly subdued by her evident state of suffering, they implored her forgiveness, like truant children at their parents' knees.

Nothing could be more affecting than the scene. The daughter embraced, with straining energy, the repentant authors of her being and the unintentional cause of her misery, of which even she did not then know the full extent. Has she since known it? Has some less faltering tongue than mine—for I dared not utter the truth when she inquired after *him*—informed

her of his fate? I confess myself ignorant—perhaps culpably, but certainly not unfeelingly so—of her after history. Gratified to be witness of even the deceptive happiness I then saw her enjoy, I have never since sought for the information of her subsequent sorrow. Still less could I risk hearing of the fickle forgetfulness of his fate and her own sufferings, which the lapse of years has possibly brought; for beautiful, and passionate, and tender as she was, she was but human, and who may answer for the wasting influence of time upon the tenderest and truest heart?

I saw her leave the hateful scene of so much anguish, little knowing that she left within it a spectacle of horror, compared to which all the rest was extacy; and I have never since had tidings of her fate. The treacherous *friend* seemed shocked—thunderstruck, when he heard my poor countryman's fate. He made all the wretched reparation in his power, as if to throw a

veil of decent repentance on his perfidy ; and on him devolved the task of paying the last duties to the hapless youth, and of telling his sad story to his friends."

The reader will easily divine that it was the body of the poor old worn-out woman of which I had witnessed the funeral.

A strong representation was afterwards made in the proper quarter, as to those events, and others of the same nature, which had previously and subsequently taken place within the *Maison de Santé.* The establishment was in consequence broken up—the persons who formed it were dispersed beyond the reach of my inquiries —and the mansion has since been converted into a seminary for young females, where, I hope, the purifying practices of virtue and intelligence have for ever wiped away the stains of its former pollution.

If, in this desultory sketch, enough has been shewn of the likelihood of abuse in *private mad-*

houses, and sufficient done to make *one* being pause before he exposes *another* to the same danger, the subject will not be without a moral, nor the writer without a reward.

THE

SISTERHOOD OF CHARITY.

THE

SISTERHOOD OF CHARITY.

How often have I regretted that the sisterhood of charity should be confined to the continent, and to catholic countries! It is an establishment at once so useful and so simple, that its extension to all the nations of the earth is as desirable as it is feasible. If the order of *Sœurs de la Charité* must be considered essentially religious, it is to be lamented that the protestant church has, for the two last centuries (unlike the early reformers), failed to extract the

essence of what is really good in the institutions of the church of Rome. But this, the best of them, may scarcely be ranked among the religious orders; it is utterly free from all that is objectionable in the generality of them. It is rather an institution of pure humanity, without one of the degrading defects arising from bigotry or fanaticism. It does not immure its votaries in cells, wasting the body, and narrowing the mind. It sends them forth into the world, in all the beautiful energy of benevolence; and calls them back to their pious retreat, not soured by austerity, nor cramped by indolence, but glowing with the wholesome fatigue of good works, to be soothed by well earned and innocent repose.

It is true the *Sœurs de la Charité* make vows inconsistent with the protestant religion, and wear a costume, grotesque at the present day to the public eye, but venerable in their own view from its antiquity, it being the same that was worn by the foundress of the order two hundred years

ago.* But the principle of the institution is independent of, and superior to, shapes of dress or forms of speech, and can adapt itself with ease and advantage to every model of society, and every mode of faith.

Why, then, should it be excluded from us? Why should not England adopt, as a *civil establishment*, what France enjoys as a religious institution? Cannot charity preserve the existence of such a blessing without the aid of sectarian vows? Are oaths of "poverty, chastity, obedience, and service to the poor,"† wanting to inspire the generous hearts that throb with sympathy, and long for opportunities to aid the wretched? No, we might have the institution of "charity" solidly and surely formed amongst us,

* The very unbecoming cap owes its origin to a piece of royal gallantry. Louis XIV. seeing a very pretty *fille de charité*, said she was so handsome as to require a veil to conceal her charms from the vulgar gaze; and he threw the white handkerchief he carried in his hand over her head. The form which it took for an instant gave the model for the cap which is worn to this day.—*Vide St. Vincent de Paul.*

† The four vows of the Sœurs de la Charité.

divested of all those extraneous trappings which clog the march of benevolence, and rob the principle of its simplicity.

I know not whether objections may exist, or might be imagined, against such an innovation on the actual state of things in England. There may be some real and rational obstacle; and abundance of bugbear opposition might be raised, by the frightened spirit of our own fanatics. Popery might be fancied lurking in every fold of even a *lay* sister's dress, by those whose prismatic vision could turn the snow-white robes of Virtue into *scarlet*, and see the goddess herself enthroned in *Babylon*. But such opponents as these are not to be dreaded, though by no means *despised*. If prejudices could exist in such a case, they should be removed, and every measure taken to secure to the institution—what *must*, in fact, become its own wherever it exists —a wide and grateful popularity.

But though adapted to all countries, there is *one* where it is not known, but to which it is

peculiarly suited, and where its existence would be a living balm poured on a nation's wounds. I speak of IRELAND, where poverty, sickness, and distress abound in untold profusion; where, annually, hundreds die of starvation, thousands exist in hunger, and where there are millions in want! *There*, at least, is a fair field for the formation of a "Sisterhood of Charity!" and nowhere are the elements for its formation so abundant. I care not whether its members consist of Protestants, Catholics, or Dissenters. It ought to be open to all, for true benevolence is ignorant of distinctions. The Catholic *Sœur de Charité* of Poland, France, or Belgium, never asks a wounded man his creed before she relieves his hurt, nor demands the expiring victim of disease to make "a sign," ere she soothes his parting spirit. Why, then, should the society itself be exclusive, when its offices are not? Established in a Catholic country, and by a Roman Catholic saint, it was impossible to make it otherwise at first; but if once

instituted among *us*, it should and would be free for the admission of *all*.

I confess myself enthusiastic on this subject; and I do all that an absent individual can do, by thus throwing before the public, as far as this book may go, a suggestion which some pure and elevated mind may mark and dwell upon, till it become, as it did on the formation of the society in France, a *passion* with one remarkable woman, and an object of solicitude and interest to the whole nation.

I shall not attempt to picture its advantages, or dwell upon them here. It appears to me the very extract and essence of Christianity put into action; and when I imagine for a moment the numbers of proud and, perhaps, prejudiced beings who perish in my country sooner than encounter the evident pauperism of a hospital, preferring *death* within the bare walls of their garrets or cellars;—when I reflect on the many who, with plenty of medicine and doctors to administer it, expire for want of consolation "to

the mind diseased," I cannot but look with envy on the country I live in, and in sorrow towards that where I *would* live, to see the blessing that is enjoyed *here*, in this divine institution, and to know that it is *not*, and never may be *there*.

It was about the year 1629 that the foundation of the establishment of the Sisterhood of Charity was laid in France, by the pious exertions of Vincent de Paul, a priest, greatly and justly celebrated for his uncommon virtues and the untiring energy of his character. He was the founder of many charitable institutions, particularly *L'Hospice des Enfans trouvés*.* He is canonized, and honoured with the title of Saint—as well merited in this instance as it has been misplaced in others. All the print shops in Paris display full length portraits of Vincent de Paul; and the artist has given a most speaking eulogy of this truly good man. Instead of being represented, like most of his brother

* The Foundling Hospital.

saints, surrounded by the absurd and revolting types of superstition, he is placed in a street at night, in the midst of a winter storm, with an infant clasped to his breast, just rescued from the shroud of snow, to which some cruel mother had consigned it, and smiling in the face of its preserver. Such was the model (so unfrequently followed,) for christian ministers, and to whom is due the institution of "*Les Sœurs de la Charité.*"

Vincent was aided in his first efforts towards this holy work by a Madame Legras, a widowed lady of illustrious birth and large fortune, who associated herself with her pious confessor; and under their joint care it rapidly acquired consistence and immense success. The *congregation*, or society, of "*Filles de la Charité*" spread all over France, and was divided into many different branches, under various titles; many females of the first quality joined the association: and instances of virtue truly sublime were frequently displayed by almost

every individual "Sister" to whom an occasion presented itself.

For nearly two centuries this admirable institution remained undisturbed, and completely identified with France, as well as with the nations into which it was received with avidity. But in 1793 even the *Sœurs de la Charité* did not escape the general ruin. The society was destroyed in Paris; the houses and property of the institution were seized and confiscated; the sisterhood dispersed and persecuted, and many of them put to death. The wretched rabble in their frenzy destroyed the very beings who, in the moment of their worst excess, would have brought them succour and safety. In the provinces, however, the *Sœurs* were respected; and in 1801 the sagacity of Buonaparte, then enjoying his most glorious title, first consul of the republic, re-established the institution, which from that day has become more flourishing, more extended, and more venerated than ever.

The duties of the "Sisterhood of Charity"

are simple in their mere mention. They are confined to attending the poor and sick, administering medicines, nursing them, and giving them the consolations of religion. But the details of such duties, put in practice, entail a varied train of trials and sufferings. A fund of charity must be deeply lodged in the heart of the female that enters into this order; and they who thus devote themselves to the service of the wretched, frequently abandon in doing so all the enjoyments attached to the possession of large fortune and illustrious birth. For this sacrifice is not as rare as might be imagined. Young girls, reared in the lap of pleasure, and destined to all the splendour and luxuries of the world, often voluntarily renounce them, and offer up a portion of the best years of their existence to the duties of benevolence and charity. We often see them flying from all the seductions of a worldly life, to embrace, with ardour, the pious obligations of such pursuits; and that, too, without having been excited to it,

by the too frequent causes of self-sacrifice—one of those sudden losses which so cruelly reveal the power of death, or of those unlooked-for changes which betray the inconstancy of passion.

They go through a noviciate of a few months, and the period of their vows is only for one year; but many continue for a succession of years, and even for life. They can possess no property, nor enjoy any inheritance. They are supported and lodged, but their services are gratuitous. They are guided and governed in their general administration by a code of instructions drawn up by the hand of Vincent de Paul himself.

Such is a slight outline of this sisterhood, a real blessing to the countries where it exists, and an honour to human nature. I will now offer the reader a little sketch (a translation of a fragment of a French pamphlet which I picked up by chance), in which the writer appears to me to have happily caught, in one of the simplest and best points of view, the feel-

ings which actuate or inspire the "*Sœurs de la Charité.*" I must lay at the door of my *original*, the indiscretion, if there be any, of exposing the name of the virtuous maiden, although she is entitled to the admiration and applause of the public.

LES SŒURS DE LA CHARITÉ:

A

SKETCH FROM LIFE.

A

SŒUR DE CHARITÉ:

A

SKETCH FROM LIFE.

I HAVE often met, in the streets of the capital, a *Sœur de Charité*, whose youth inspired me with involuntary respect. Nothing could be more engaging than the expression of her countenance, nor more animated than her gait. There was an inexpressible charm in her blue eyes, and one could not help imagining that her woollen vestments concealed a beautiful form,

as yet unchanged by time or fatigue. An air of health and content characterised her person, and was quite enough to satisfy those who might have attributed her apparent sacrifice to some one of those sorrows, of which youth exaggerates the importance and duration. One might say with certainty that misfortune had never approached her; and it was easy to imagine that her presence alone must, of itself, have been a happiness to the sufferers who enjoyed it.

At whatever distance I perceived the Sœur Eugénie, I, as it were mechanically, carried my hand to my hat; and my respectful salutation was recompensed by a benevolent smile, which gave me a sensation of pleasure in which pride certainly was mingled; but that feeling, I believe, enters into the most innocent actions of our lives. This interchange of salutations had established a sort of silent intercourse between us, of which we never failed to avail ourselves at each fortuitous *rencontre*. I was called one

day to see a friend of mine, a poor devil of an author, whose talent had not preserved him from misery, and whose persevering labours had brought him to the verge of the grave. I was less surprised than delighted to see the young sister at his bed-side. She was reciting some prayer, in a low voice, while the poor invalid seemed to enjoy a profound sleep. The half-opened door allowed me to enter without being perceived; and, during some minutes, I contemplated the touching spectacle of innocence supplicating for misfortune.

A low sigh announced that the sufferer was awake. The Sister perceived me, saluted me as usual, and rose to offer her patient a potion that she had herself prepared. He took it in his hands in a sort of transport. His looks expressed the most lively gratitude. " My friend," said he to me, " God has taken pity on me, and has sent an angel to reconcile me to myself. Since I have had the happiness to fall ill, her care of me has been most tender and

unceasing, nothing could surpass her charity ; and life is the least benefit I owe her."

" Speak less," said the young Sister, " the doctor was particular in his orders on that point;" and then, turning to me, as to an old acquaintance—" he is much better—the doctor has pronounced him out of danger ; but a single imprudence might be fatal to him. Do not allow him to say more than is absolutely indispensable." Then, after having arranged a second potion, which the patient was to take in an hour—" I leave you," said she ; " my duty calls me away : the doctor will come at noon, and I will return in the course of the day."

My friend was just at that age when we have no faith in medicine, or the doctor who comes to administer it. He set more value on the visits of the sister Eugénie than in all the science of the faculty ; and as soon as his guardian angel was gone, he assured me that he was entirely recovered, and feared nothing, and

that he only consented to be still an invalid for the happiness of receiving the attendance of Mademoiselle Montmégean ; and as he perceived a movement of surprise, on my part, that I was not able to repress, he added, " Yes, my friend, this young person is the grand-daughter of the Count de Montmégean, descended from one of the most noble families of La Bresse. Her grandfather emigrated; all his property was seized and sold, and his young daughter, whom he had left in France, reduced to a state of great difficulty. At length, when our cruel countrymen were tired of crying ' *Vive la mort !*' he came back, but would not accept any place under the emperor, and, in consequence, he could not obtain the restitution of his property. His daughter had married a rich financier, and passed a part of the year on one of her husband's handsomest demesnes, the Château D'Ambly, of which my father was the agent; and it is there that the young Sister whom you have just seen was born.

"Madame de Chavigny was exceedingly kind to my father. She took me into her favour, to the great benefit of my education, and of my *amour-propre* also. My father, depending on her protection of me, made me prosecute my studies. I studied for the bar; but a taste for letters seized me. That fever of literature has upset me. I fancied myself destined to resuscitate Moliere, or to dethrone Corneille. I began this double operation, by scribbling a comedy of pure imagination, and inventing an historical tragedy, which has excited the transports of my friends. Ruined by this success, I have renounced my profession, and my father has, in consequence, withdrawn the allowance he made me. Convinced that fame is superior to every thing, I have tried to live on my celebrity, and found myself singularly weakened by that *régime;* but I was not the less resolved to die, rather than make any application to my father. In this situation my name having met the ear of the Count de

Montmégean's grand-daughter, she came to my assistance. All that the most tender humanity, the most ingenious charity could invent, has been employed by sister Eugénie to bring me back to my duties. She wrote secretly to my parents, and vouching for a repentance, of which she had then only the hope, she has reconciled me with my family. You will easily conceive that I could not do otherwise than yield to such an influence. I have promised my father that I will in future devote myself to the profession of the law, and, I need not add, that I will keep my word."

"But," said I to my friend, "what motive could induce the grand-daughter of the Count de Montmégean to devote her life to such arduous duties?"

"If you knew," resumed he, "the purity of that truly angelic mind, the choice she has made would not surprise you. From her earliest childhood her every thought was charity. Born to a very moderate fortune, she passed her moments of recreation in the cot-

tages of the poor; and always found means to serve them, whether in helping, or in sharing with them the fruits of her savings, or in calling the attention of her mother to scenes of misery, of which she would not otherwise have known the existence.

" Her mother had projected a rich establishment for her, and as long as she lived, Eugénie made no opposition. But a year after she had the misfortune to lose her, and when, at the expiration of the mourning, she was urged to conclude this alliance, she refused with as much dignity as courage. With infinite judgment and good feeling she divided her little fortune between those of her relations who were most in want of it, and the poor of her native village. It was at first apprehended that this young person (she was not then nineteen years of age) would not be able to bear so fatiguing a life; but you see how her zeal supports her, and what a beautiful serenity is imprinted on her expressive countenance."

My friend recovered; and, faithful to the promises that had been pledged for him, he made his father's latter days his happiest. About a year ago he surprised me by a visit.

"My dear friend," said he, "I am come to implore your assistance."

"On what account?" said I.

"The law of indemnity has given back to the Count de Montmégean's grand-daughter a fortune of two millions of francs. All her family write to entreat her to re-enter the world, where so brilliant a station awaits her. I fear that I shall fail, and I wish to be supported in this attempt by a help that may give weight to my arguments, and render the result less doubtful."

Though I was convinced in my own mind, that our visit would not have the success that my friend hoped for, still I consented to accompany him, and we set out accordingly for the hospital of ———.

We were conducted into the Sister Eugénie's parlour. She waved her hand to us. "Wait a

moment," said she, with a smile, "there are others in greater haste than you are." This gave us an opportunity of witnessing her surgical duties, and of observing the angelic patience of this admirable woman. She left no word unanswered: the tone of her voice, so different from the harsh, unmusical sounds of the sufferers, had the magic power of allaying their pains and soothing their complaints. I was shocked by the gross expressions of one of the patients; but the Sister Eugénie, who guessed my thoughts, exclaimed, "He is suffering greatly; but he is generally very tractable." Thus she found excuses for every thing that displeased us. It was touching to see that celestial countenance following, with intense interest, the different chances of life or death in the unfortunates committed to her charge. Those delicate fingers extended with such precaution the lint on the wound of that labourer, whose apathy contrasted beautifully with the inquietude of his attendant! Her hand supported

with such native grace the head of that old man, whose almost extinguished looks were raised to heaven, and then fell on the sister, as if recommending her to the divine protection! She seemed to forget that we were there; so natural did it appear to her to give prompt relief to sufferings which seemed to diminish from the moment when she was occupied in relieving them.

Her benevolent occupation over, the Sister Eugénie gave us audience. At the first words that my friend uttered she became serious, and seemed to listen with great attention. The announcement of the immense fortune coming into her possession drew forth no expression of surprise; and after the recital of my colleague, as I was going to speak—"It is useless," she said to me, with precipitation—"My fate is long since fixed, and for ever. I am happy!"

"But your fatigues!"

"I have never been so well as since I renounced the world."

" Your resolution will drive your family to despair."

" I believe in the friendship of my relations; but God has not fitted me for society. If I grew old, and remained single, I should soon become an object of neglect, and perhaps of ridicule. If I decided on marrying, I own to you, I should be in the constant fear of being unable to fulfil the new duties that would then be imposed upon me. On the other hand, those I have myself chosen are so easy! You know not all the happiness that we enjoy here. Is not the certainty alone of contributing to the recovery or the salvation of one unfortunate an enjoyment preferable to all those that you could offer me?"

Our secret had transpired, I knew not how; for the sister Eugénie had hardly imparted her refusal to us, when we saw all the convalescents successively enter the parlour which we had quitted. They came, with tears in their eyes, to congratulate the Sister on her good fortune,

and they praised God for having shed his blessings on her whom they called their visible providence. The countenances of those good people bore the impress of two very different sentiments; one might read there an affectionate satisfaction for the happy event which was, as they thought, to change the destiny of the Sister Eugénie, and at the same time one might discover a lurking regret at the idea that they were about to lose her to whose care they attributed their recovered health. But this last feeling was not predominant, for they threw themselves at her feet. Some took her hands, which they wetted with their tears, others pressed their lips on her dress with deep respect. " Ah, Madame! Ah, sister Eugénie! Be happy! Go—leave us —and may the benedictions of all the wretched that you have saved, accompany you!"

The sister Eugénie made vain efforts to conceal her emotion; her face was bathed with tears of joy; her looks wandered with delight on all the actors of this touching scene; she smiled on

them, and said to us, with an accent that I shall never forget, " God has just sent me a trial, which had nearly overcome me."

She afterwards called for writing materials, and taking a pen, she wrote, with a steady hand, her renunciation of her restored property ; but she reserved to herself the power of distributing it ; and to commence her generous intentions, she sent for a young novice, named Sister Agatha. The poverty of her family, and the express orders of her mother, had determined her to embrace, as a resource, a profession which is suited only to an enthusiastic and religious mind. " Dear sister," said she to her, " I know the goodness of your heart ; I can appreciate better than any one all the efforts you make to be happy ; and if a scrupulous attention to your duties were sufficient to prove a vocation, it would be difficult to doubt of yours. But I have read your heart : and it is not at the post where you are placed that you can most usefully serve your fellow creatures. Go back to the world, where

your destiny is henceforward fixed; ensure the happiness of a husband, and become a model for mothers, as you have heretofore been an example for pious and devoted maids." Sister Agatha wished to reply; but her amiable friend and companion did not give her time—" I have just recovered a fortune, the distribution of which is already determined. You have too much friendship for me to refuse to subscribe to the little arrangements that I have made." With these words she took leave of us, and hastened to shut herself up in her oratory.

I learnt some days after, that not only was Agatha most generously provided for, on quitting the sisterhood, but that my friend had been summoned to a notary, with whom some one had deposed, addressed to him, a sum of thirty thousand francs, the donor unknown. It was not difficult for him to penetrate the secret; but though he has continued often to see the Sister Eugénie, he has respected the mystery with which she wishes to clothe the subject. Not a

word of his has ever betrayed the secret of his benefactress. But he thought it his duty to detail to her the purposes to which he applied the generous gift, thus availing himself of an indirect means of proving his gratitude.

THE

ONE-HANDED FLUTE PLAYER,

OF

ARQUES, IN NORMANDY.

THE

ONE-HANDED FLUTE PLAYER,

OF

ARQUES, IN NORMANDY.

"PENDS-TOI, brave Crillon! *nous avons combattu à Arques, et tu n'y étois pas,*" was the laconic announcement which Henry IV. gave to his friend, of his most brilliant and almost miraculous victory. This memorable place is not more remarkable for its historical interest than it is rich in natural beauties. It has every charm that can retain its inhabitants on their

native spot, or seduce a stranger to it. Pleasure in its possession, and pride in its recollections, must be sufficient to fill the mind of its villagers with all that can endear home; and its union of actual loveliness with associations of the past, forms a magical attraction to the idle traveller in its neighbourhood.

From Dieppe to Arques is about a league in distance, and an hour's walk—to the common pedestrian of the world; but for him who pauses and ponders on his road, who picks up mental aliment at every step, who finds a moral in a ruin, or a lesson in the rustling of a tree, who reads nature that he may know men—for such a one, from noon to sunset may be scarcely sufficient for the lounge.

Having strolled through the greater part of Normandy, eaten my fill of apples in the orchards which skirt its level highways, and drunk cider to my heart's content at the village inns, I found myself, on a fine evening in October, fast approaching the term of my pilgrimage—the

aforesaid village of Arques. I left Dieppe behind me, reposing in the mixture of simple dulness and diminutive bustle of those little amphibious towns, which scarcely belong to sea or land, or which are rather common to both. As I struck into the fields, I heard the murmur of the fishermen mixed with the flowing of the tide —a Brighton packet was nearing the harbour, with its cargo of curiosity, and, perhaps, of care. Another had just sailed for England, freighted with joyous hopes of home and happiness, and no doubt with many a feeling of travelled triumph and importance. There was a fine breeze which, to these little vessels, running so close up to the wind, answered very well for either passage;—so I turned my back upon the sea, quite at ease for each buoyant adventurer.

On clearing the town, we come immediately into the valley of Arques, and enter on the scene of the celebrated battle fought in September, 1589. If we reach the place prepared for its observance, we recal the description given by Sully:

" Au bout de la Chaussée d'Arques règne un long côteau tournoyant, couvert de bois taillis. Au-dessous est un espace de terre labourable, au milieu duquel passe le grand chemin qui conduit à Arques, ayant des deux côtés deux haies épaisses. Plus bas encore, à main gauche, au-dessous de ce terrain labouré, est une espèce de grand marais, ou terre fangeuse."* I could not make use of a clearer or better account, for every thing is precisely the same to this day, except that the marsh is changed into a fertile pasture, and looking to old Sully's detail of the battle-field, we have now the prospect of a grazing herd of cattle, instead of the " *escadron de lans-quenets ;*" a flock of sheep in lieu of the " *batail-lon des Suisses ;*" and that the wooded eminence echoes no more to the advancing shouts of De Chartres, Palcheux, Brasseuse, and the other heroic companions of Le Bon Henri.

Rising above the trees which envelop the

* " Mémoires," tom. I. p. 151. London, quarto edition, 1745.

village on the right, the ruins of the castle catch the eye, and the vividness with which the scene of upwards of two centuries gone was brought before us, is checked by the sudden view of these crumbling fragments of the once powerful fortress—that strong hold from whose embrasures the Hugonot cannon did, that day, such execution on the forces of the League. The illusion lasts no longer. The hand of Time is felt to be more powerful than the touch of Fancy, and we sink into the contemplation of the sober reality around us.

I wound my way up the eminence on which the old towers totter to decay; then, passing under the broken archway which received the triumphant Henry after his victory, and tracing the rugged path which marks the grand approach, I reached the summit of the mound that forms the basement of the vast expanse of building. The immense extent of these ruins gives a fine feeling of human grandeur and mortal littleness; and the course of reflection is

hurried on as the eye wanders over the scenery around. This may be described in one sentence, as the resting-place on which a guilty mind might well prepare for its return to virtue.

While I stood musing "in the open air, where the scent comes and goes, like the warbling of music," and neither wished nor wanted other melody, the soft sounds of a flute came faintly towards me, breathing a tone of such peculiar and melting expression as I thought I had never before heard. Having for some time listened in great delight, a sudden pause ensued; the strain then changed from sad to gay, not abruptly, but ushered by a running cadence that gently lifted the soul from its languor, and thrilled through every fibre of feeling. It recalled to me, at the instant, the fables of Pan, and every other rustic serenader; and I thought of the passage in Smith's "Nympholept," where Amarynthus, in his enthusiasm, fancies he hears the pipe of that sylvan deity.

At times mine ear
Catches the sylvan god's extatic pipe,
Trilling a melody so sad and drear
For Syrinx' loss ———
——— but like the cuckoo's song,
'Tis ever distant, and its source unseen.

* * * * *

Could Nature's self be wrong,
Which, ever as this sweet lament occurr'd,
Would droop and wear a sympathizing mien ?
The zephyrs closed their wings, or only stirr'd
To heave a sigh ; the goats, and herds, and flocks,
On all the fields and rocks,
Ceased browsing, and upturn'd their anxious eyes,
With awful looks. Methought the very trees
Stood sorrow-struck, with pendant boughs, like ears,
List'ning the dirge. Yet with what ease
His charming pipe, when happier moods arise,
In voluble and jocund rhapsodies
Can madden into mirth whoever hears.
O what a merry, merry peal,
Then will his glib and dulcet reed
Lavish in many a liquid reel ;
While Echo, with a rival speed
Upon the hill-tops dancing, strains her throat
To double each reverberating note !
Then Nature laughs outright ; the wild flowers fling
Their incense up ; the cattle leap for glee ;
The jocund trees their branches toss on high
As if they clapp'd their hands ; the cloudless sky
Smiles on the smiling earth, and every thing
Makes holiday and pranksome jubilee.

Repeating these lines, I became myself their practical and involuntary illustration; for, scarcely conscious of the movement, I descended the hill towards the village, in a pace lively and free as the measure of the music which impelled me. When I reached the level ground, and came into the straggling street, the warbling ceased. It seemed as though enchantment had lured me to its favourite haunt. The Gothic church on my right assorted well with the architecture of the scattered houses around. On every hand a portico, a frieze, ornaments carved in stone, coats of arms, and fretwork, stamped the place with an air of antiquity and nobleness; while groups of tall trees formed a decoration of verdant yet solemn beauty.

A few peasant women were sitting at the doors of their respective habitations, as misplaced, I thought, as beggars in the porch of a palace; while half a dozen children gamboled on the grass-plat in the middle of the open

place. I sought in vain among these objects to discover the musician; and, not willing to disturb my pleased sensations by common-place questionings, I wandered about, looking, in a sort of semi-romantic mood, at every antiquated casement. Fronting the church, and almost close to its western side, an arched entrance caught my particular attention, from its old yet perfect workmanship, and I stopped to examine it, throwing occasional glances through the trellis-work in the middle of the gate, which gave a view of a court-yard and house within. Part of the space in front was arranged in squares of garden, and a venerable old man was busily employed in watering some flowers. A nice young woman stood beside him, with a child in her arms: two others were playing near her; and close at hand was a man, about thirty years of age, who seemed to contemplate the group with a complacent smile. His figure was in part concealed from me; but he observed me, and immediately left the others, and walked

down the gravel path to accost me. I read his intention in his looks, and stood still. As he advanced from his concealed position, I saw that his left leg was a wooden one—his right was a perfect model of Apollonic grace. His right arm was courteously waved towards me —his left was wanting. He was bare-headed, and his curled brown hair showed a forehead that Spurzheim would have almost worshipped. His features were all of manly beauty. His mustachios, military jacket, and tight pantaloon, with red edging, told that he was not "curtailed of man's fair proportion" by any vulgar accident of life; and the cross of honour suspended to his button-hole, finished the brief abstract of his history.

A short interlocution, consisting of apology on my part and invitation on his, ended in my accompanying him towards the house; and, as I shifted from his left side to his right, to offer one of my arms to his *only* one, I saw a smile on the countenance of his pretty wife, and another

on that of his old father, and my good footing with the family was secured. We entered the hall—a large bleak anti-room, with three or four old portraits mouldering on the walls, joined to each other by a cobweb tapestry and unaccompanied by other ornament. We then passed to the right, into a spacious chamber which was once, no doubt, the gorgeously decorated withdrawing-room of some proudly-titled occupier. The nobility of its present tenant is of a different kind, and its furniture confined to two or three tables, twice as many chairs, a corner cupboard, and a *secretaire*. A Spanish guitar was suspended to a hook over the Gothic marble mantel-piece: a violin lay on one table; and fixed to the edge of the other was a sort of wooden vice, into which was screwed a flute, of concert size, with three finger-holes and eleven brass keys; but of a construction sufficient to puzzle Monzani, and the very opposite of those early instruments described by Horace,

" Tenuis, simplexque foramine pauco,
Aspirare et adesse choris erat utilis, atque
Nondum spissa nimis complere sedilia flatu."

It is useless to make a mystery of what the reader has already divined: my one-legged, one-armed host was the owner of this complicated machine, and the performer on it, whose wonderful tone and execution had caused me so much pleasure. But what will be said when I tell the astonished, but perhaps incredulous public, that his "good right hand" was the sole and simple one that bored and polished the wood, turned the keys and the ivory which united the joints, and accomplished the entire arrangement of an instrument, unrivalled, I must believe, in ingenuity and perfection.

Being but an indifferent musician, and worse mechanic, I shall not attempt minutely to describe the peculiarities of the music or the management of the flute, as the maker and performer ran over, with his four miraculous

fingers, some of the most difficult solos in Verne's and Bergbiguer's compositions, which lay on the table before him. Nothing could be more true, more tasteful, or more surprising, than was his execution—nothing more picturesque or interesting than his figure, as he bent down to the instrument as if in devotion to his art. I listened for more than an hour, as his mellow and silvery tones were echoed from the lofty walls of his chamber, and returned by vibrations from the guitar, which seemed as much delighted as myself, for it "discoursed most eloquent music."

This extraordinary man is a half-pay colonel in the French service, though a German by birth. His limbs received their summary amputation by two quick-sent cannon shots at the battle of Dresden (I believe.) Since he was disabled, he has lived in his present retirement,

"Passing rich on fifty pounds a-year;"

and happy is it for him that Nature endowed

him with a tasteful and mechanical mind (rare combinations) while Art furnished him with that knowledge of music, without which his life would have been a burden. I do not consider myself at liberty to enter into the minutiæ of his eventful story, which he told with a *naïveté* and candour, enough to have charmed a second Desdemona. But with regard to his flute-playing, nothing could be more affecting than the touching manner in which he recounted his despair on discovering that he had lost his arm —the *leg* was in comparison a worthless and unregretted member. It need not to be told that he was an enthusiast in music; and when he believed himself thus deprived of the best enjoyment of his life, he was almost distracted. In the feverish sleep, snatched at intervals from suffering, he used constantly to dream that he was listening to delicious concerts in which he was, as he had been wont, a principal performer. Strains of more than earthly harmony seemed sometimes floating round him, and his

own flute was ever the leading instrument. Frequently, at moments of the greatest delight, some of the inexplicable machinery of dreams went wrong. One of those sylphs, perhaps, the lovely imaginings of Baxter's fanciful theory, had snapt the cord that strung his visioned joys. He awoke in ecstacy: the tones vibrated for a while upon his brain; but, recalled to sensation by a union of bodily pain and mental agony, his inefficient stump gave the lie direct to all his dreamy paradise, and the gallant and mutilated soldier wept like an infant for whole hours together! He might make a fortune, I think, if he would visit England, and appear as a public performer; but his pride forbids this, and he remains at Arques, to show to any visitor unusual proofs of talent, ingenuity, and philosophy.

THE NIGHTMARE.

THE NIGHTMARE.

" Somnia fallaci ludunt temeraria nocte,
Et pavidas mentes falsa timere jubent."

CATULLUS.

THE various phenomena of dreams have hitherto baffled the speculations of all the physiologists, from Wolfius down to Spurzheim. Visions arising in sleep, and floating over the surface of the mind, are still as unaccounted for as the congregated vapours which hover in the Heavens. They are analogous to them in other respects as well, for they often present us the brightest and most fantastic imagery, and pour over our senses a dew, as refreshing as that which falls on earth " from the bosom of a dropping cloud." But were the illusory wan-

derings of the brain, during its demi-collapsed state—or when the nervous fluid ceases to communicate with it—or when our mental lethargy is broken by the excitement of some organ of sensation—or when, in short (to quit the jargon of theory, and speak plainly), we are asleep—were they but one continuous chain of pleasure, an article would never have been written on "The Nightmare." Passing, then, from those exquisite illusions of slumber, when "delighted thought in Fancy's maze runs mad," and forgetting the still more delicious waking dreams, those

> "noontide trances, hung
> With gorgeous tapestries of pictured joys,"

we must now turn to the dreadful visitings of that demon, who comes upon us at times, "making night hideous."

It has been supposed and asserted, that fearful dreams are the consequences of evil thoughts. It is true that they are often so; and, if the dreadful punishment of incubus were to fall

only on the doers of bad deeds, its retributive inflictions might be considered just. But we know that the preceding frame of mind has no positive influence on the victims of this inexorable fiend, who often passes by the breast "the deepliest stained with sin," to fix on the bosom of innocence and beauty: for

> "Oft on his nightmare, through the evening fog,
> Flits the squab fiend o'er fen, and lake, and bog,
> Seeks some love-wilder'd maid by sleep opprest,
> Alights, and grinning sits upon her breast."

Nor is sanctity itself a safeguard from the encounters of this evil spirit, call it by what name, or imagine it under what figure we may:

> "Saint Withold footed thrice the would,
> He met the nightmare, and her name he told;
> Bade her alight, and her troth plight."

We find in these two last quoted passages a rather puzzling difference in their respective personification of the spirit, arising from the absurdity of the compound word which designates it in the English language, and which comes from *Night*, and, according to Temple,

from *Mara*, the name of a spirit, that in the northern mythology was related to torment or suffocate sleepers. It would be hard to find an instance of a simple derivation more absurdly mismanaged than in the formation of our word, which has led Shakspeare to make the night-demon a *mare*, and Darwin, to convert it into a fiend mounted *on* a mare. The latter bold supposition is certainly the more tolerable of the two, and is daringly embodied in Fuseli's picture; which, though in itself the essence of caricature, serves seriously to illustrate Burke's remark, as to the ludicrous effect produced by painting, whenever it attempts to bring before us the palpable forms of those phantoms which poetry makes forcible and grand.

This demon has been from the earliest times, the privileged tormentor of mankind, and a favourite subject with poets. The *nocturni lemures* of every age, have been honoured with many a painful celebration; but probably the finest description of the morbid oppression in

which all this phantasma originates, is that of Eliphaz, in the fourth chapter of the Book of Job. "In thoughts from the visions of the night, when deep sleep falleth upon men, fear came upon me and trembling, which made all my bones to shake. Then a spirit passed before my face. The hair of my flesh stood up. An image was before mine eyes; it stood still, but I could not discern the form thereof."

Compared with the sublimity of this vague but appalling passage, all succeeding attempts seem feeble. The vision of Pompey, in Lucan's Pharsalia, is powerless beside it. Clarence's and Caliban's well-specified imaginings produce nothing of the same effect; and the details of Athalie's terrific dream, when her mother Jezabel appears before her, require the acting of Mademoiselle Duchesnois to make a legitimate horror rise superior to disgust:

"En achevant ces mots épouvantables,
Son ombre vers mon lit a paru se baisser;
Et moi, je lui tendais les mains pour l'embrasser:
Mais je n'ai plus trouvé qu'un horrible melange
D'os et de chair meurtris et traînés dans la fange."

These instances are but a proof of the many efforts to produce a vivid image of the horrors of sleep, by means of spectral agency in its most revolting aspects. Other poets have traced the persecuting fancies which oppress the dreamer, unmixed with the personal terrors of those just cited. Thus Young—

> "My soul fantastic measures trod
> O'er fairy fields, or mourn'd along the gloom
> Of pathless woods, or down the craggy steep
> Hurl'd headlong, swam with pain the mantled pool,
> Or scaled the cliff, or danced on hollow winds."

And Coleridge, who, in the following powerful lines, seems to have been strongly imbued with the vague intensity that distinguishes the passage from holy writ above quoted:—

> "But yesternight I pray'd aloud
> In anguish and in agony,
> Upstarting from the fiendish crowd
> Of shapes and thoughts that tortured me:
> A lurid light, a trampling throng,
> Sense of intolerable wrong,
> And whom I scorn'd, those only strong!
> Thirst of revenge, the powerless will
> Still baffled and yet burning still!
> Desire with loathing strangely mix'd,
> On wild and hateful objects fix'd.

Fantastic passions! madd'ning brawl!
And shame and terror over all!
Deeds to be hid which were not hid,
Which, all confused, I could not know,
Whether I suffer'd or I did:
For all seemed guilt, remorse, or woe;
My own or others still the same,
Life-stifling fear, soul-stifling shame!"

All these scattered allusions to the influence of nightmare in its various modifications, are but imperfect tributes to its potent operations, and only prove it a good auxiliary for poetic purposes. A more extended homage to its tyranny, and a wider elucidation of its effects, have been, however, lately furnished by a modern writer; and Nightmare, Incubus, or Oneirodynia, now stands upon its proper pedestal, in all the becoming obscurity and terror by which "it lives and has its being." All that has been before written on the subject of dreams, falls short of the work now alluded to, in the detailed display of their afflicting attributes. We cannot, indeed, raise it to the level of the beautiful imaginings which abound in our own periodical writings; the Spectators, Guardians,

Tatlers, etc. ; nor does it give any glimpse into the philosophy so richly displayed in the *Somnium Scipionis* of Cicero. Its merits are, singularity of conception, great eloquence, and an occasional strain of chaste yet voluptuous feeling which breaks through its generally exaggerated tone. It has been observed, that, " La Poésie a ses monstres aussi bien que la Prose," and *Smarra, or the Night-demons*, is probably the most eminent of those extraordinary abstractions which the romantic extravagance of the age so fluently pours forth. It professes to be a translation from the Sclavonian; but the pretended translator and real author is M. Charles Nodier, a writer little known in England, but familiar to French readers from a wildness of genius, glowing style, and facility of composition, which hurry him on to fritter away his powers on works which can hope for no more lasting celebrity than that of the other ephemera of the day. One of his last effusions is " Smarra;" and he tells us in his preface, that to enter with interest into the secret of its compositions, it is,

perhaps, a *sine quâ non* to have suffered the illusions of the nightmare, of which *triste phenomène* Smarra is the primitive name.

It appears also, on the authority of this author, that Illyria is the chosen region of this frightful disease; for he tells us, that it is rare to meet with a family in that country, of which all the members are free from its attacks; and, without offering any needless explanation on the part of his supposed Sclavonian original, in whom it would have been quite natural to have devoted his talents to the illustration of this national infirmity, M. Nodier gives us a train of apologetical reasoning, which, as applied to himself, is ingenious and eloquent: but infinitely more eloquent is the rhapsody which follows, and whose only plan,

> "If plan it may be called which plan hath none
> Distinguishable,"

is the recital of a tissue of dreams which never were dreamt, by a personage who never existed.

Lucius, the imaginary hero, travelling in Thessaly, in those days when the magicians of that country enjoyed the amplest exercise of powers which mocked the conjurations of the Olympian Psychagogi, and apparently under their influence, falls asleep on his courser's neck: but it is better to let him tell his own story.—"I had just completed my studies at the school of Athenian philosophy, and, eager to explore the beauties of Greece, I had visited for the first time the poetic land of Thessaly. My slaves awaited me at Larissa, in a palace prepared for my reception. I longed to wander alone, at the awful hour of midnight, through that forest, renowned for the mystic rites of enchantresses, whose green masses of foliage extend like draperies along the banks of the Peneus. Deep shades had collected over the wide-spread canopy of the woods; and all was dark, save where the tremulous ray of some pale and mist-encircled star shot a fitful twinkling through the scanty openings which the woodman's axe had left at

intervals in the overhanging boughs. My heavy lids closed in spite of me over my weary eye-balls, which ached from tracing the white path that hid itself in the copse-wood; and I could only bear up against the drowsiness which oppressed me, by observing the measured tramp of my horse, as the sand seemed to murmur hoarsely, or the parched grass to sigh beneath the pressure of his hoofs. If he chanced to stop, I was instantly aroused by the unusual pause; and, repeating his name in a loud voice, I urged his tardy pace to one better suited to my weariness and impatience. Startled suddenly by some unknown object, he bounded wildly from the path, poured from his fiery nostrils the half-smothered neigh of terror, wheeled round in dismay, and staggered back, still more terrified by the lightnings which flashed from the broken flints beneath his feet. 'Phlegon, Phlegon,' cried I, while my languid head fell on his neck, which he threw backwards in his alarm, 'oh, my faithful Phlegon! is it not time to reach

Larissa, where every joy, and sleep, the sweetest of all, awaits us? One effort more of courage, and thou shalt stretch thee on a litter of the choicest flowers, for the golden straw which is gathered for the oxen of Ceres is not fresh enough for thee.'—'See you not, see you not,' replied he, shuddering, 'the torches which they brandish before us, consuming the wild heath, and mingling a baleful vapour with the air I breathe? How can you expect me to dare their magic circles, and their threatening dances, sufficient to appal the very horses of the sun?' And still the measured tramp of my horse's hoofs ceased not to echo in my ears, and a slumber more profound brought a longer respite to my uneasiness: only that, from time to time, a group of phantoms, lighted on their way by fantastic wreaths of flame, passed laughing over my head; or that a mis-shapen spirit, in the form of a beggar or a wounded wretch, clung to my foot, and, in a phrenzy of horrible joy, suffered himself to be dragged along; or that a hideous

old man, whose ugliness seemed to record the loathsomeness of crimes, as well as the deformity of years, leaped up behind me, and folded me in his skeleton arms. 'Courage, Phlegon,' cried I——"

After this opening, the reader is somewhat prepared for, though he finds it hard to follow, the mazes of unreal terrors which fill up the remainder of the work. The frightful train of adventures, of which the sleeping Lucius is the fancied witness, and in part the victim, are recited with a teeming and terrific minuteness.

"Have you not seen at Athens, in the first days of the year, when the all-regenerating rays of the new born sun fall gloriously on the Ceramicus, a long train of wan and ghastly wretches lining its walls? Their limbs are motionless, their cheeks hollowed by famine, their looks spectral and unmeaning. Some bend grovelling to the earth, like brutes; others are standing, but they lean against the pillars, and seem half sinking beneath the weight of their emaciated

frames. These living spectres have scarcely preserved a trace of aught human. Their skin is like white parchment outstretched on a framework of bones; their eye-balls shew not a single spark of soul; their livid lips writhe with horror and dismay, or with mirth still more hideous, for they curl into a smile as fierce and scornful as the last thought of a criminal who braves and spurns his fate. Most of them are agitated by weak but unceasing convulsions, and tremble like the iron tongue of that sonorous instrument which children love to sound between their teeth. The most wretched of all are those who, by the dire award of all-conquering fate, are doomed to terrify every beholder by the monstrous deformity of their gnarled limbs and inflexible attitudes.

"It is only during the periods which intervene between the regular returns of sleep that they taste any respite to their woes. Foredoomed to glut the vengeance of the enchantresses of Thessaly, they relapse into agonies

which no tongue can express, as soon as the sun, sinking beneath the horizon, has ceased to protect them from the redoubtable queen of darkness. For this it is, that, with eyes rivetted on his path, they follow his too rapid career, in the ever-baffled hope that he may for once forget his azure bed, and remain suspended in the golden clouds of the west. But no sooner does night come to undeceive them, shedding from his wings of crape a gloom, unbroken even by one of those livid gleams which tinged just now the summits of the trees, than a fearful murmur arises amongst them. Their teeth chatter with despair and rage; they crowd together, or shun each other's contact, and seem at each step to shrink from an assassin or a ghost. 'Tis night! Hell re-opens!——"

Among the merciless magicians who sport in the misery of their victims, Meroé, the sorceress, is the leading personage; and, of all the hideous monsters who figure in her train; Smarra is her favourite and well-beloved familiar. This

precious fiend receives from his mistress a special mandate to torment the persecuted sleeper.

"She spoke, and the monster sprang from her burning hand, turned writhingly and rapidly in the air, outspread his wildly-fashioned wings, uprose, sank down, expande d,shrunk, and, in the semblance of a deformed and spiteful dwarf, with nails of a metal sharper than steel, which pierced without tearing the flesh, he darted upon my breast, enlarged to a monstrous size, raised his enormous head, and burst into a fiendish laugh. In vain my glazed eye sought for some object of support. Thousands of night-demons played around me: women of stunted growth and aspect; red and violet-coloured serpents, spitting flame; lizards, with hideous human faces, crawling in blood and mire; heads newly struck from still palpitating bodies, looking on me with glaring eyes, and bounding on the legs and feet of reptiles. They danced in a circle around me, deafening me with their cries, terrifying me with their atrocious gambols,

and parching my quivering lips with disgusting caresses. Meroé guided their movements as she floated above them, with her long hair flashing forth flames of livid blue. Her features were the same as usual; but under their wonted loveliness I was shocked to discern, as through a transparent gauze, the leaden tints and sulphur-coloured limbs of the enchantress; her fixed and hollow eyes were floating in crimson; sanguined tears trickled down her cheeks; and her hand, as she waved it in the air, seemed to print upon the void the trace of a hand of blood."

After such a combination of horrors as this exhibition displays—

"Nocturnos lemures portentaque Thessala rides?"

In this strain of still-increasing suffering, the dream of Lucius goes on, through epode and episode, leaving the agonies of Orestes and all other victims of Eumenides, goblins, ghosts, or witches, far behind. Of these excruciating torments I have already had enough, and I shall

now take leave of them and their historian with tenderest feelings of compassion, (but not *sympathy*, thank Heaven!) if, as he admits by implication in his preface, he is himself the unfortunate subject from which his vivid pictures are drawn.

LAURA PEMEGIA.

INTRODUCTION.

On the northern coast of Sicily, not far from the town of Mont-Real in the Val-di-Mazara, there is a little bay, where the island fishing-boats find shelter from the storms that frequently assail the coast, but where larger vessels might vainly seek for anchorage or safety. Rising from the midst of a forest, which stretches from the foot of Mount Santo to the sea, is distinguished the steeple of a monastery, belonging to the brethren of the order of White Penitents. Palermo is to the westward; and though full four leagues distant, the heavy sound of its bells can be

clearly heard through the serene atmosphere in the stillness of night. To the eastward of the bay, a rude mass of rock rises proudly up, crowned by a bower of cypress. There are few evidences of animal life to be seen, except the sea fowl silently whirling in their circling flight, and the goats which bound from the rocky projections around, in search of the wild thyme, and other herbage, which profusely embroiders the ascent and perfumes the air.

The natural advantages of this spot have not been aided by man. The industry of the other parts of the island has here a striking contrast. Scarcely any trace of cultivation meets the eye; but flowers of the most beautiful colours, and the richest odour abound, and the air is by far more pure than in any part of Sicily. The rigours of winter, and the enervating heats of summer, are equally unknown. Delicious streams run through, and refresh the valley. In short, there is perhaps

no corner of the earth more secluded, more healthy, or more beautiful.

Towards the close of the summer of 1819, I was travelling in the south of Europe, when unexpected circumstances forced me to abandon a project of visiting in detail the whole of the Italian islands. I embarked at Reggio, in Calabria, on board a small vessel bound for Marseilles; and but a short part of our voyage was effected, when a violent tempest arose. Owing to want of skill and courage in the crew, we made but a feeble resistance, and we were blown directly towards Sicily. The inviting appearance of the bay I have just described, induced the captain to trust to its shelter; but we had scarcely reached the point which secured us from the winds, when we ran aground in the shallows that stretch far from the shore. The storm luckily abated, and the wind taking a favourable shift, enabled us to leave our dangerous position. But a

day was spent in some refitting and refreshing, of which both vessel and crew stood in need.

I went on shore in one of the boats which were dispatched for a supply of fresh water. In my admiration of the scenery, I wandered listlessly into the forest, forcing my way through myrtle and laurel bushes, till I suddenly stopped before a white marble statue, on a simple pedestal, raised on a mound which commanded a view of the forest, the valley, and the bay.

The statue was exquisitely wrought. It represented a peasant girl in the earliest bloom of womanhood, filling a basket with roses, which seemed to grow wildly at her feet. The expression of innocence and happiness, its never failing accompaniment, was skilfully traced on the charming features; and the scanty drapery was not meant to conceal that elegance of form and contour which is inseparable from perfect beauty, and is common to all stations in life.

The figure faced the sea, and was surrounded

with rose trees and odorous shrubs. On that side of the pedestal were engraven the following words in English,

> " She has passed from among us, but her heart
> Is with us still ;"

and an Italian translation of the sentence was chiselled underneath.

My admiration of the sculpture, and of the beauty it represented, was mixed with curiosity to obtain some knowledge of the facts connected with it; for the English inscription proved it to be linked, in some way, with some associations which in this distant land I felt a sort of title to partake in.

While I was thus absorbed, I heard a rustling in the shrubs below me, and soon perceived a woman rapidly mounting a path, which led from the direction of the monastery to the place where I stood. I observed her distinctly as she approached: she appeared to be about forty years of age, tall, with the traces of beauty, but thin and wasted by mental or physical

suffering. Her negligent dress, dishevelled hair, rapid movements, and unsteady demeanour, filled me with that irresistible awe, which the appearance of insanity, in any of its stages, so commonly excites. I withdrew a little, but not so as to lose sight of her. I know not whether she thought she was observed, but if she did, it was with perfect indifference.

She approached the statue, threw herself on her knees before it, and struck violently three or four times on the marble steps, with a stone which she carried in her hand. The sharp sound had something singularly impressive, as it rang through the forest. Then the woman bent her head, and laid her ear close to the earth, as if she expected some answer to her awakening summons. But she to whom it was addressed, replied not.

"Laura! Laura! Laura!" exclaimed the woman, in accents rudely harsh; silence followed the hoarse echo of her call. She then struck her clenched hand against her breast,

tore her hair, and with groans and piercing cries, bewailed some untold, or perhaps, (as I thought), some imaginary loss.

Two men now appeared: they were almost breathless from the speed with which they had ran; they endeavoured to lead the woman quietly away; but she struggled fiercely, and with piercing screams, until a young priest of interesting, though by no means of refined appearance, came forward. At this sight the woman was at once appeased; she flung her arms round his neck, and sobbed deeply, but tranquilly, on his bosom. In a few minutes the whole group had disappeared, and the stifled sighs and groans of the poor woman, alone told me they had taken the path in the direction of the monastery.

There seemed an attraction in these sounds, for I unthinkingly and almost insensibly, followed them, till the party reached the gate of the monastery. The romantic solitude in which this building was placed, formed in itself a suf-

ficient excitement to my curiosity, but that was considerably increased by the scene I had witnessed: and altogether, I felt warranted in entering the open gate for the purpose of inquiries more minute than those of a passer by.

The porter soon brought me into the presence of the young monk, to whom I expressed my wish with as little abruptness as was possible, and with the best excuse I could frame, for what (notwithstanding my national right to know something of the circumstances relating to the English inscription,) might still seem an unauthorised intrusion.

The monk listened to me with great urbanity, and answered in a tone that spoke him to be personally and deeply interested in the subject. He was, however, reserved, and, I thought, unwilling to enter fully into it, until, in the course of our conversation, I happened to acknowledge myself to be an Irishman. I had no sooner done so, than a more familiar and confidential air was evident in my companion;

I profited by this to the utmost, and, in short, obtained from him all the information I required, and much more than I expected. While I took my slight repast in the refectory, he went to his cell, and shortly returned with a manuscript which he presented to me.

"This," said he, "contains all the details of the story which I have lightly sketched to you, as far as I myself was not personally concerned. You will perceive how much your being an Irishman has entitled you to the gift; and I not being able to read the English language, you will see that for me this MS. possesses but little value. As we walk down to the shore, I will tell you the few particulars of what passed after the written narration was finished; you will then know completely the short history of Laura Pemegia."

The monk performed his promise as we slowly wended through the deep shades of the forest. When we reached the little bay, the boatmen were nearly ready to return to the

ship. The fresh water, and some goats and fowls, were soon stowed in the pinnace, and we rowed away from the shore; the monk waving his hand, and shewing by his gestures, that he valued more than its worth the Mosaic snuff-box of which I had requested his acceptance.

On examining my MS. I found that it was written in imperfect English, mixed with many *Irishisms* of idiom and expression; it was evidently done at long intervals. The earlier parts were in an unformed and childish hand, which greatly improved towards the conclusion, and *that* had taken the form of a journal, but very abrupt and irregular. I endeavoured to throw it all into a connected form, and to purify its errors as best I might. But I have not changed its style, and but slightly altered its phraseology here and there, and I thus present it to the reader. The passage which, as I have arranged it, forms the opening, was written on a detached sheet of paper, and was evidently almost the last page composed by the

unhappy author. It was traced with an agitated hand, and was literally deluged with tears. But these had long since dried up, and left every word still legible.

LAURA PEMEGIA.

Country of my birth, once so dear to me! Beautiful forest, whose shades have so often sheltered me! Sweet stream, in which, youthful and innocent, I have many a time sported! I now return to you, in guilt and misery—witness my bitter tears! Fatal and treacherous sea! when the ship that bore me from my native shore skimmed thy smiling surface, why didst thou not swallow me up? Innocent then, and not knowing even the name of sin, death had been a blessing—death, my only refuge now!

Gracious Heaven! mercy, mercy and pity, for my poor children! They, at least, are blame-

less, and even for *me* there may be pardon. Oh, my beloved children, this is the evening hour, in which we were always together: perhaps, even now, you are calling my name—cruel thought!—Oh, never, never forget your mother!

Let me dry those tears. I would do one act of virtue—I would that my fate might prove a warning to the companions of my childhood—I would that the remnant of my sad life might be an example to those young and guileless girls who still gambol in yonder valley, as I once did—alas, alas!

This is my first endeavour to compose any thing in a connected form; my letters, such as they are, do not pretend to that. They were meant for only *one* being, who will find *no* imperfection in his too faulty Laura! What I am now about to attempt is by his wish. He will excuse all defects.

I was born on the coast of Sicily, not far from the foot of Mount Santo, and at no great

distance from Palermo. My father, a poor fisherman, died before I could know him. He left to my mother his cabin, his boat, and his nets. My brother was some years older than I. He was my mother's favourite; but as he was good-hearted and kind to me, and as I loved him myself very much, no feeling of jealousy disturbed me.

From morning till night I watched our goats, as they browsed on the hills, while my brother and Anselm were out fishing. I played on the rocks all day, as happy as the goats I tended, and at nightfall I came back to the cabin just as gaily as they. Brown bread and milk formed my supper; my bed was of straw.

I grew up in ignorance of everything beyond what I saw, and even much of *that* was inexplicable. I had no notion of the Divinity; but when the storms blew on our coast, and the fishing boats were tossed by the waves, I knelt down mechanically, at the foot of the high and rude cross placed on the shore, and I prayed

fervently for Anselm and his companions. At twelve years old, I knew how to milk the goats, make cheese, knit a thick thread, with which my mother mended the nets, and gather flowers. I was indebted to this kind of life, and to my mother's dislike of me, for a total ignorance of evil. But neither had I the least notion of virtue. Nothing could exceed the simplicity of my thoughts. I loved to oblige my companions, to yield to them in all matters, merely because in doing so, I felt a sensation of pleasure. I had a mortal fear of offending my mother, because she used to treat me with great severity.

The day on which I completed my fourteenth year, was an important epoch in my life. I had risen at daybreak; and, joined by several of my young friends, ignorant and thoughtless like myself, I went out to gather our harvest of white roses, on the skirts of the forest, these flowers being a source of traffic with the chemists of the neighbouring towns. We culled

our roses for some hours, and made our task a pleasure, by turning it into a playful contest as to who should first fill her apron. I got the start of all my companions in running to reach a rose tree which I knew to be untouched, and this made me gain the victory. I expressed my triumph somewhat noisily, when I saw suddenly before me a handsome young man, who stood gazing and smiling at me. His dress, and the colour of his hair, told me he was a foreigner, as well as some others who began talking to my companions. As he looked at me I became confused, because the poverty of my dress scarcely concealed my knees. I stooped down as if to pick more roses, but so awkwardly that I stumbled forward, and all the contents of my apron fell on the ground. The stranger helped me to gather them again. His eyes were fixed on me, which covered me with confusion. The gaze of a man above my own rank, was directed towards me for the first time, and I, by degrees, became alarmed. He said

some words in a language I did not comprehend; and then, as if recollecting himself, he spoke to me in Italian, and asked me my name, and where I lived. I answered both questions truly, and without hesitation.

The other travellers now came close to us. I perceived among them a Sicilian. He approached me familiarly, and asked me nearly the same questions as the young foreigner, but in a tone very different, and as if he had known me quite well. I found myself immediately surrounded by the whole group. I became dreadfully frightened; my knees trembled; and I believe I was just going to burst out crying, when the young man motioned with his hand, and put an end to my annoyance. The party instantly withdrew, and we saw them strike into one of the forest paths.

I did not return home till near the middle of the day, to take away my dinner, which was almost always laid aside for me by my mother in a little basket, and which I usually eat upon

the rocks, that our goats might not be left too long unwatched. As I entered the cabin, I was startled at seeing the foreigners all sitting round the table, and making a meal of our coarse brown bread, and some goats' milk and cheese. I sprang away to hide myself. My mother called me back harshly, and I dared not disobey. I slipped into the darkest corner of the room, and crouched down as closely as I could. My mother handed me a little bread and some cheese.

"Take this, Laura," said she; "you can have no milk to-day; I have given it all to these gentlemen."

No sooner did the handsome young man hear this, than he rose from his seat, came towards me smiling, and offered me what remained in his cup. He asked me to drink. I was afraid it would make my mother angry, and hesitated, without refusing.

"Drink, then, without looking like a fool!" exclaimed she, with her usual frown. I took

the cup from the young man, tasted the milk, and offered him the rest.

" Come, come," said he, " take some more," in a tone and with a smile which would have made me drink without being thirsty. He spoke to me for a long time, and seemed to listen with pleasure to my short replies. He finished by telling me not to be afraid of him. I promised him I would not; and indeed, I had already begun to be accustomed to him. He had light hair, curling all over his head, large blue eyes, very white teeth, and a beautiful ring on his finger. His clothes received a great share of my admiration. I had never seen any so fine. They were all perfumed; and my chief wonder was that he condescended to touch me with the tip of his finger. While he talked to me, the Sicilian and my mother whispered together at the far end of the room. I heard now and then a few words, and knew they were about me. The man having asked my age, I was somewhat sur-

prised, when my mother replied that I was fifteen, although I was exactly a year less.

The rest of the party soon left the cottage, but the young man and the Sicilian staid till near night-fall. As they went away they said to my mother, "Remember your promise for to-morrow!"

"To-morrow," answered she, in a firm voice, but without raising her eyes from the ground. All the remainder of the evening she appeared thoughtful and uneasy; I supposed this to be caused by my brother's absence. His boat, with a few others, had not returned since morning, and the night looked threatening; I went to bed very early, and no sooner had I laid down, than my mother, contrary to custom, came into the recess in which I slept; she sat down on the bed-side, without speaking a word; she gazed at me for some time, and when at length she seized my hand with a convulsive movement, I felt hers trembling violently. She inclined

her head towards me, put her arms round my neck, raised me to her, and pressed me to her bosom ; she then, for the first time in my recollection, kissed me, and she did so over and over again. I felt her tears covering my cheeks.

This unexpected burst of tenderness was astonishing to me. I was quite bewildered in endeavours to account for it ; a sudden remorse seized me, and I as quickly gave expression to it.

" My dear mother," said I, sobbing, " you believe that I merit this tenderness, but indeed, I do not ; you think I took care of the goats to-day ; instead of that I neglected them all day, gathering roses in the forest."

" Innocent child that thou art !" exclaimed she ; then, after a short pause, she rose quickly, wiped her eyes, and in her usual voice she added :

" There now, go to sleep—yes, it was the goats I was thinking of."

With these words she left me. I soon fell asleep, but I dreamt uneasily and slept badly ;

and that was also I believe, for the first time in my life. The next morning my mother kept me in the cabin, I forget on what excuse. After breakfast she desired me to come to the door, and pointing towards the sea, she said,

"Look at that vessel at anchor, Laura. These foreigners are going away; tell me, would you like to go with them?"

She had scarcely spoken these words, when the handsome young man appeared close to us, with the Sicilian beside him; my mother pulled me aside, quickly, but not harshly.

"My child," said she, with an expression of tenderness, still more affecting, because less violent than that of the night before, "this foreigner wishes to take you with him: will you go?"

I looked at my mother, scarcely knowing what I saw. Astonished, shocked, indeed, I could not speak a word; yet I could not possibly believe that what she said was in jest, for never

during my existence had I heard her utter any thing approaching to one.

"Speak, Laura!" said she, impatiently.

"Go away with him!" exclaimed I, timidly; "go away with him! Why? For what purpose? Does he want to marry me?—I am too young, am I not?"

The young man turned away, blushing deeply, when he heard my question. The Sicilian burst out laughing; my mother took me aside into the recess, and making me sit down beside her on the bed, she took my hand, and spoke calmly, and with a serious expression of look and voice.

"Marry you, Laura! How could you think of such a thing? Great people like him never marry poor girls like you. But you will not be less happy if you consent to go with him."

"I thought it was not right for young girls to live with men who will not marry them," said I.

"Who told you that?" asked she.

"Don't you remember, mother, that the other day at the fountain the neighbours were talking about Bianca's daughter, and said they despised her because she was constantly with Jacopo, the vine dresser, who would not have her for his wife?"

"Bianca's daughter is despised, Laura, because Jacopo is in the same rank with her, and there is nothing to prevent his marrying her if she was a proper girl. But when a great lord fixes upon a poor girl, it is because he really loves her and means to make her very happy. Do you understand the difference?"

"Not exactly, mother."

"Well, well, it is of no great matter, whether you do or do not. The question is, will you go with the young lord? You see how delicate his conduct is; he would not on any account take you without your consent, and positively forbids me from using my authority to make you go."

"Well then, I will *not* go. I never could

bring myself to leave home, to be separated from Anselm, from my companions, and my poor little white kid that would be sure to be lost;" and here I began to cry bitterly.

"My child, you must go. You cannot be so much your own enemy, mine too, and your brother's."

"How can I do any harm to Anselm in staying with him? I love him better than all the world."

"Look here," said my mother, in a low voice, and with a stern air; "see this cabin ready to fall on our heads; our boat is so bad, that it is at the risk of Anselm's life that he ventures out in the slightest breeze. When we have no roof to cover us, no boat to go a-fishing, what is to become of us? When we are perishing together of hunger and misery, you will have to say, 'All this is my fault—I might have saved us all—but I chose to see my mother and my brother die of want.'"

"No, no!" cried I, "I will not be so wicked:

I will go, mother; I am quite ready to go—not with the Sicilian, but with the handsome young man!"

"That's right, that's a good girl; but don't cry so much," replied my mother, drying my tears, and caressing me.

"May I come back next year?"

"To be sure you may, and that all dressed with gold, so fine that nobody will know you."

"Oh, yes, yes, Anselm will, I am sure."

"Poh, poh! this is foolish talk; you must get ready at once."

"Oh, mother, mother!" exclaimed I, seizing her hand in both of mine.

"What?" asked she impatiently.

"Stop for one moment, I implore you. I am not quite decided. May I not wait for Anselm's return?"

"Certainly not. I will not allow any more delay. The gentleman is already tired of all this?"

She left the house, from whence the others

had already gone away. I wept and sobbed most piteously, but as quietly as I could for fear of my mother.

The recess in which this scene took place had only one little window, of a single pane of glass, which saved it from being totally dark. A strange man came in, in a short time after my mother left me, and not seeing any one, he proceeded, before I had time to be frightened, to place on a stool a bag, which though not large, appeared heavy. He then left the house, and on touching the bag, I found that it was full of pieces of money. From what my mother had said, I had no doubt but that this was a gift from the young foreigner.

I was pleased at the notion of his generosity, and astonished at his wealth, but still more as to how he meant to employ me. Was it to attend him as a servant? I could do nothing but watch his goats, and surely there were people enough in his country who knew how to do that!

My mother soon came back, accompanied by a woman carrying two large bandboxes, full of various articles of dress. It was a dress-maker from Mont-Real. I was soon attired in a travelling costume; my dark brown hair was carefully combed and brushed; I put on shoes and stockings, which I found very awkward. In short, I was completely changed; and I must own that my tears flowed less bitterly.

While my mother helped to dress me, there was something contradictory in her whole manner. It was a mixture of satisfaction and gloom: sometimes she suddenly fell into deep thought, and then all at once started away, with some violent gesture, or muttering some words that were like curses. She did all she could to hurry me away. I heard her at times ask the fishermen and the sailors as to the state of the wind, and saw her more than once mount the rock beside our cabin, anxiously looking out in the direction which Anselm had taken the day before. Some one told her that it was not

likely the ship could sail till next day. This seemed to irritate her, and when I spoke to her in a mild and humble tone, she said,

"I am anxious that you were gone, that this scene was over. It is painful to part from a child who has never given cause of complaint to her mother."

These kind words made me cry again.

At length my mother was to be satisfied. The wind became quite fair: Anselm did not appear. I lost my only hope, and my heart sunk. The hour fixed for sailing was past. The captain sent to say they only waited for me. The dress-maker from Montreal, and one of our near neighbours, conducted me, or rather carried me, to the boat, which waited on the beach. The young man did not appear, but the Sicilian stayed talking with my mother, who bade me farewell in a sort of sullen grief, and then entered the cabin and shut the door. The two women placed me in the boat, embraced me, and wished me all sorts of happiness. As they

retired up the beach, I heard one of them say to the other,

"Our neighbour has done a bad thing."

"She will repent it," was the answer.

As for me, I was almost insensible to what passed. I could not summon force enough to weep. They took me from the boat into the ship, I scarcely know how. But when it began to move, and when, turning towards the land, I saw my young companions extending their arms towards me, and my beautiful white kid looking on all sides, as if he sought his mistress, my heart seemed torn asunder. I hid my face in my hands, and wept. I once more looked to the shore. I expected to see my mother kneeling before the cross, in prayers for my safety, but she was not there.

Among the people on the deck there was a woman, dressed in black, who seemed to feel greatly for me. Her countenance was of that kind that at once gives confidence. She spoke a few words to me in very imperfect Italian, but

I comprehended that she wished to lead me to the place that was destined for me. On descending the stairs that led below, I cast one despairing glance to the right hand, for it was at that side that I knew Anselm was to be looked for. I distinguished three or four boats in the distance. I could almost fancy that I recognized our's—but it was now too late! I was totally miserable.

I perceived on entering the room which they called the state cabin, him whom I looked on as the cause of my sufferings. He showed so much emotion that I was alarmed; he walked backwards and forwards with an agitated air. After some minutes he sent away the woman in mourning, and sitting down beside me, took my hands in his, and pressed them affectionately without saying a word. There was no trace of anger in his looks, but they seemed to announce some struggle with himself. In fact, he said to me, with great emotion,

"Laura, it is not too late; say but a single

word, and I will put you on shore again; but it must be on condition that you solemnly promise not to return to your mother."

"What do you mean?" said I, shedding another torrent of tears; "how could I make such a promise? Is it not for my mother, and the place she inhabits, that I suffer this grief? Of what good is it to me to land in Sicily again, if I must not instantly go back to all that I love?"

"This then is your decision?"

"Certainly, if it does not offend you. I know that I belong to you, but when I have lived a year with you, perhaps—"

"Who told you that you belonged to me?"

"My mother; and did you not give her money to build a new cabin that she might let me go with you?"

"Oh, woman, woman!" cried he, abruptly, and seemed afraid to say more. He passed his hands before his eyes, and turning from me as if it had

been painful to look upon me, he said in a firm, yet a tender tone:

"Laura, I am incapable of deceiving you. No matter what arts may have been used for seducing your innocence, I must at once tell you that I never can marry you. I am not yet twenty. My family, but above all, my father, have claims on me, which I cannot violate—I never can marry you."

"I know that: my mother told me so; she said—"

"What did she say?"

"That grand lords like you never married poor girls like me."

"Why, then, have I taken you away?"

"That's the very thing I cannot understand, for I can do absolutely nothing but knit, and tend the goats."

"You must learn to love me, and make me happy; that knowledge will be worth all others. For my part I will make it my study to please you in all things; I shall love you

better than any thing on earth. O, Laura! another project, a virtuous notion had entered into my head; but I saw you, and your bewitching looks totally took possession of my heart and soul. How could I feel you to be within my reach, and resist the power that urged me towards you!"

I listened to these words, without in the least understanding their meaning at the time. Thus passed the first day.

The remainder of the voyage was for me a continuation of new and delicious enjoyment. How truly he spoke! How sweet and how easy was the silence of love! Let any one imagine me, as I then was, a child almost, brought up as I have described, until fourteen years of age, without even the affection of a mother, and all at once becoming the object of regard to the most amiable of men. My ears, accustomed to nothing but rude sounds, suddenly filled with the delightful accents of love; without any guide, delivered up to myself, and without re-

ligion to light my way. It was thus that all things combined for my ruin, and my innocence, even, more fatally than the fatal beauty which nature had given me.

I attached myself at once and passionately to him whom I considered my only benefactor and friend! Who could have avoided loving him! His beauty was his least advantage. He was kind-hearted, good-tempered, sincere, and of unbounded benevolence. His liberality and frankness gained universal confidence, and the dignity of his manners seemed to mark him for command. The sailors all adored him; and I soon learned that the vessel was his own, and that he had been, for above a year, sailing about the shores of Italy and Greece, and was now returning to Ireland, his native country. I had never heard the name before, and scarcely knew what was meant by other countries, or by the word foreigner. I was not long in learning the differences between people. The manners of the crew, for they were all Irish, were totally dis-

tinct from those of my own countrymen ; and I was often amused, walking the deck arm in arm with Lord L——, to observe the joyous air of the men and the arch expression of their countenances. Whenever we appeared, there seemed a tone of happiness spread over all. I attributed this to their devotion to Lord L——, but they used also to gaze at me. One day some one whispered to another in my hearing, and in bad Italian, " she is as beautiful as an angel." Lord L—— was looking on me at the moment. It was the first time that any lips but his had uttered these words, and I blushed excessively. We retired to the cabin. He inquired why I blushed so deeply. I told him what I had heard, and that I was afraid some one else loved me, because they used the very words that he did so often. I begged of him never to take me on deck again, because I loved only him, and would not, and could not love any other. The most passionate caresses were his only reply. It was always in this way our conversation ended.

The few minutes occasionally passed asunder were not lost to me. Hannah, the woman whom I have spoken of, and whose sole duty was to attend on me, told me a thousand instances of his generosity from childhood up to the present time. It was she who informed me of his name and country. Hannah was the daughter of one of his tenants. Her husband, a soldier in an English regiment, had died in Sicily, and she was in the greatess distress when Lord L—— fortunately discovered her, furnished her with money, and offered to take her to Ireland in his yacht, for so the ship was called. She was about thirty years old. Her quiet manners and a tone of mildness and goodnature, decided Lord L—— to confide me to her care. He could not have chosen better; for never were better qualities united in a human being. She believed me to be, at first, the daughter of an English officer, who had died in Sicily, and that Lord L—— intended to adopt me and have me educated at his expense. This may serve as an

instance of her simplicity. She was a long time without discovering the truth; and when she did find it out, she was afflicted by two feelings. She was as pious as she was grateful. She would if possible have saved me without offending her benefactor. I often caught her alone and in tears, and when she was convinced that the mischief was without remedy, she made a vow, unknown to me, to devote her life to me. She kept her word.

Next to Hannah, the person that pleased me most was O'Brien, Lord L——'s valet. He was in great favour with his master, in whose family he had lived nearly thirty years. He enjoyed a great freedom, which he never abused. But he was always inclined to lecture, and give advice, which no one took amiss, probably because they never followed it. He took a great liking to me, which was not, however, any proof of my merit, because my belonging to his master was enough for him. But that did not seem to me sufficient to account for the kind of compas-

sionate regard with which he sometimes treated me. One day Lord L—— surprised us together, while this honest fellow was endeavouring to make me comprehend something in praise of his master. Hearing himself named, Lord L—— said to me, laughing,

"Laura, don't listen to O'Brien. He is our most decided enemy—you don't know the advice he gives me."

O'Brien looked steadily at Lord L——, and having perfectly understood what he had said, replied,

"No, my Lord, it is not *I* who am her enemy."

He quitted the cabin immediately, and Lord L—— looked very much embarrassed.

The voyage was fortunate. It was, however, a long one. So they told me at least, but how short did it appear to me! The 1st of July, 1812, we saw the southern coast of Ireland. The sailors shewed their joy by dancing, singing, and other boisterous proofs. We landed

at Cove, in presence of a crowd of spectators. I was painfully affected, and could not help envying Hannah, who wept with pleasure to see her native land once more.

We made the least possible delay, and did little more than pass from the ship to a carriage drawn by four horses. We went rapidly along the banks of a magnificent river, and through the city of Cork. A succession of new objects seemed to flit past me as we hurried along, and a distance of near one hundred miles was accomplished in one day.

END OF VOL. I.

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